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HISTORICAL SKETCHES
OF
S T A T E S M E N .

FIRST AND SECOND SERIES.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

HISTORICAL SKETCHES
OF
STATESMEN
WHO FLOURISHED IN
THE TIME OF GEORGE III.

BY
HENRY LORD BROUGHAM, F.R.S.,
AND MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FRANCE.

A New Edition.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

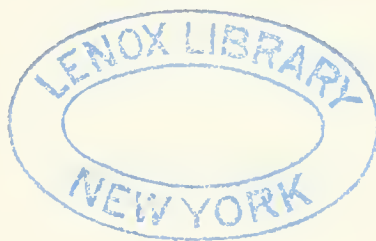
VOL. II.

SECOND SERIES.

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MEN



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STATESMEN

OF THE

TIMES OF GEORGE III.

INTRODUCTION.

THE misstatements which were circulated respecting the first series of these sketches make it necessary to mention that nothing can be more untrue than representing the work as a republication. By far the greater part of the articles which had ever appeared before were materially altered or enlarged, some of them almost written over again; while a great many were entirely new in every part: as those of Lords Mansfield, Thurlow, Loughborough, and North, Chief Justice Gibbs, Sir W. Grant, Franklin, Gustavus III., Joseph II., Catherine II., Queen Elizabeth.—The same observation is applicable in at least the same extent to the second series. Much of George IV., the Emperor Napoleon, Lord Eldon, Sir W. Scott, is new; and Mirabeau's public character, with the whole of Sir P. Francis, Mr. Horne Tooke, Lord King, Mr. Ricardo, Charles Carrol, Neckar, Carnôt, Lafayette, and Madame de Staël, are new.

No distinguished statesman of George III.'s time has been omitted, except one very eminent person, Lord

Shelburne, afterwards Marquess of Lansdowne, to whom, however, occasion has been taken of doing some justice against the invectives of mere party violence and misrepresentation by which he was assailed. The reason of the omission has been of a personal nature. The long and uninterrupted friendship which has prevailed between the writer of these pages and Lord Shelburne's son and representative, both in public and private life, would have made any account of him wear the appearance of a panegyrist or a defence of his conduct, rather than a judgment pronounced on its merits. If it should be urged that a similar reason ought to have prevented the appearance of other articles, such as that upon Sir S. Romilly, Mr. Horner, and Lord King, the answer is plain. Personal friendship with those individuals themselves gave him the means of judging for himself, and that friendship was only another consequence of the merits which he was called upon to describe and to extol. But in Lord Shelburne's case, friendship for the son might have been supposed to influence an account of the father, who was personally unknown to the author.

It is a matter of sincere gratification to find that justice has been very generally done to the impartiality which was so much studied in the composition of the first series. To maintain this throughout the second has been the chief aim of its author; and if he has ever swerved from this path which it was so much his resolution to tread, the deviation has, at least, been unintentional, for he is wholly unconscious of it.

It would be a very great mistake to suppose that there is no higher object in submitting these Sketches to the world than the gratification of curiosity respecting eminent statesmen, or even a more important purpose, the maintenance of a severe standard of taste respecting Oratorical Excellence. The main object in view has been the maintenance of a severe standard of Public Virtue, by constantly painting political profligacy in those hateful colours which are natural to it, though

sometimes obscured by the lustre of talents, especially when seen through the false glare shed by success over public crimes. To show mankind who are their real benefactors—to teach them the wisdom of only exalting the friends of peace, of freedom, and of improvement—to warn them against the folly, so pernicious to themselves, of lavishing their applauses upon their worst enemies, those who disturb the tranquillity, assail the liberties, and obstruct the improvement of the world—to reclaim them from the yet worse habit, so nearly akin to vicious indulgence, of palliating cruelty and fraud committed on a large scale, by regarding the success which has attended those foul enormities, or the courage and the address with which they have been perpetrated—these are the views which have guided the pen that has attempted to sketch the History of George III.'s times, by describing the statesmen who flourished in them. With these views a work was begun many years ago, and interrupted by professional avocations—the history of two reigns in our own annals, those of Harry V. and Elizabeth, deemed glorious for the arts of war and of government, commanding largely the admiration of the vulgar, justly famous for the capacity which they displayed, but extolled upon the false assumption that foreign conquest is the chief glory of a nation, and that habitual and dexterous treachery towards all mankind is the first accomplishment of a sovereign. To relate the story of those reigns in the language of which sound reason prescribes the use—to express the scorn of falsehood and the detestation of cruelty which the uncorrupted feelings of our nature inspire—to call wicked things by their right names, whether done by princes and statesmen, or by vulgar and more harmless malefactors—was the plan of that work. Longer experience of the world has only excited a stronger desire to see such lessons inculcated, and to help in tearing off the veil which the folly of mankind throws over the crimes of their rulers. But it was deemed better to direct the attention of the people, in the first instance, to more

recent times, better known characters, and more interesting events. In this opinion these Historical Sketches had their origin.

It remains to be explained why the Dialogue upon Monarchical and Republican Government has been omitted in the present publication, after being announced in the advertisement. Not only would the insertion of that piece have extended this Second Series to an inconvenient size, but it would have given the work a controversial aspect and engendered political animosities, thus impeding the effects intended to be produced by a work avoiding all partial or violent discussions. For this reason the appearance of the Dialogue has been postponed. It was written some years ago; its doctrines have been destined to receive very material confirmation from subsequent events; they are very certain to become at no very remote period the prevailing faith of the country.

But, although this more general discussion has for the present been omitted, constant opportunities have been afforded, in the course of these Sketches, for contemplating the comparative vices and advantages of the two forms of Government—for holding up to Sovereigns the imminent perils into which they rush by setting up their pretensions, and gratifying their caprices, at the expense of their people's rights and interests—for reminding the people of the mischiefs occasioned to themselves by violent and sudden changes to which the state of society has not been accommodated—for exposing the evil consequences of those abuses to which party connections are liable—and, above all, for teaching the important duty incumbent on all men, under what government soever they live, the sacred duty of forming their own opinions upon reflection, nor suffering them to be dictated by others whose object it is to deceive and to betray. In proportion as the People are thus educated and fitted for the task of Self-government will it be both safe and expedient to intrust them with an increased share of

power; and it would be difficult to fix any bounds to the extent of that share, other than are set to their own improvement in political knowledge and experience.*

* In the last volume the commonly received account was adopted which represents Lord Bute as having superintended the education of George III. A fuller inquiry into the subject has rendered it nearly as clear that this is an erroneous opinion as that an intimacy subsisted between those two eminent individuals after the Bute Ministry was broken up. It seems almost certain that there is no more foundation for the one notion than for the other, although both have been so generally prevalent.

GEORGE IV.

It would not be easy to find a greater contrast in the character and habits of two princes succeeding one another in any country, than the two last Georges presented to the eye of even the most superficial observer.

George Prince of Wales had been educated after the manner of all princes whose school is the palace of their ancestors, whose teacher is boundless prosperity, whose earliest and most cherished associate is unrestrained self-indulgence, and who neither among their companions form the acquaintance of any equal, nor in the discipline of the seminary ever taste of control. The regal system of tuition is indeed curiously suited to its purpose of fashioning men's minds to the task of governing their fellow-creatures—of training up a naturally erring and sinful creature to occupy the most arduous of all human stations, the one most requiring habits of self-command, and for duly filling which, all the instruction that man can receive, and all the virtue his nature is capable of practising, would form a very inadequate qualification. This system had, upon the Prince of Wales, produced its natural effects in an unusually ample measure. He seemed, indeed, to come forth from the school a finished specimen of its capabilities and its powers; as if to show how much havoc can be made in a character originally deficient in none of the good and few of the great qualities, with which it may be supposed that men are born. Naturally of a temper by no means sour or revengeful, he had become selfish to a degree so extravagant, that he seemed to act upon a practical conviction of all mankind being born for his exclusive use; and hence he became irritable on the least incident that

thwarted his wishes; nay, seemed to consider himself injured, and thus entitled to gratify his resentment, as often as any one, even from a due regard to his own duty or his own character, acted in a way to disappoint his expectations or ruffle his repose.

His natural abilities, too, were far above mediocrity; he was quick, likely, gifted with a retentive memory, and even with a ready wit—endowed with an exquisite ear for music, and a justness of eye, that fitted him to attain refine taste in the arts—possessing, too, a sense of the ludicrous, which made his relish for humour sufficiently acute, and bestowed upon him the powers of an accomplished mimic. The graces of his person and his manners need not be noted, for neither are valuable but as the adjunct of higher qualities; and the latter, graceful manners, are hardly to be avoided by one occupying all his life that first station which, by removing constraint, makes the movements of the prince as naturally graceful as those of the infant or the child too young to feel embarrassment. But of what avail are all natural endowments without cultivation? They can yield no more fruit than a seed or a graft cast out upon a marble floor; and cultivation, which implies labour, discipline, self-control, submission to others, can scarcely ever be applied to the Royal condition. They who believe that they are exempt from the toils, and hardly liable to the casualties of other mortals—all whose associates, and most of whose instructors, set themselves about confirming his faith—are little likely to waste the midnight oil in any contemplations but those of the debauchee; and beings, who can hardly bring themselves to believe that they are subject to the common fate of humanity, are pretty certain to own no inferior control. “*Quoi donc*” (exclaimed the young Dauphin to his Right Reverend preceptor, when some book mentioned a king as having died)—“*Quoi donc, le Roi meurentils?*” “*Quelquefois, Monseigneur,*” was the cautious and courtly reply. That this Prince should afterwards grow, in the natural course of things, into Louis XV., and that his infant aptitude for the habits

of royalty thus trained up should expand into the maturity of self-indulgence, which almost proved too great a trial of French loyal patience, is not matter of wonder. Our Louis, notwithstanding the lessons of Dean Jackson, and the fellowship of Thurlow and Sheridan, was a man of very uncultivated mind—ignorant of all but the passages of history which most princes read, with some superficial knowledge of the dead languages, which he had imperfectly learnt and scantily retained, considerable musical skill, great facility of modern tongues, and no idea whatever of the rudiments of any science, natural or moral; unless the very imperfect notions of the structure of government, picked up in conversation or studied in newspapers, can be reckoned any exception to the universal blank.

We have said nothing of the great quantity of all—the test of character,—firmness, and her sister truth. That the Prince was a man of firm mind, not even his most unscrupulous flatterers ever could summon up the courage to pretend. He was much the creature of impulses, and the sport of feelings naturally good and kind; but had become wholly selfish through unlimited indulgence. Those who knew him well were wont to say that his was a woman's character, when they observed how little self-command he had, and how easily he gave way to the influence of petty sentiments. Nor was the remark more gallant towards the sex than it was respectful towards the Prince; inasmuch as the character of a woman transferred to the other sex implies the want of those qualities which constitute manly virtue, without the possession of the charms by which female weaknesses are redeemed; independently of the fact that those weaker parts are less prejudicial in the woman, because they are more in harmony with the whole. That they who draw the breath of life in a court, and pass all their days in an atmosphere of lies, should have any very sacred regard for truth is hardly to be expected. They experience such falsehood in all who surround them, that deception, at least suppression of the truth, almost seems necessary for self-defence; and accordingly, if their

speech be not framed upon the theory of the French Cardinal, that language was given to man for the better concealment of his thoughts, they at least seem to regard in what they say, not its resemblance to the fact in question, but rather its subserviency to the purpose in view.

The course of private conduct which one in such a station, of such habits, and of such a disposition, might naturally be expected to run, was that of the Prince from his early youth upwards; and when he entered upon public life, he was found to have exhausted the resources of a career of pleasure; to have gained followers without making friends; to have acquired much envy and some admiration among the unthinking multitude of polished society; but not, in any quarter, either to command respect or conciliate esteem. The line of political conduct which he should pursue was chalked out by the relative position in which he stood to his father, and still more by that monarch's character, in almost all respects the reverse of his own.

It thus happened that the Whig party, being the enemies of George III., found favour in the sight of his son, and became his natural allies. In the scramble for power they highly valued such an auxiliary, and many of them were received also into the personal favour of their illustrious political recruit. But state affairs were by him only taken as a stimulant, to rouse the dormant appetite, when more vulgar excitement had fatigued the jaded sense; and it would be extremely difficult to name the single occasion on which any part was taken by him whom the Whigs held out as the most exalted member of their body, from the end of the American war until the beginning of the contest with France. An event then occurred which brought his Royal Highness upon the stage, but not as a friend of the Liberal party. He came forward to disclaim them, to avow that his sentiments differed widely from theirs, and to declare that upon the great question which divided the world, he took part with the enemies of liberty and of improvement. The French Revolution

had alarmed him in common with most of his order ; he quitted the party for many years ; he gave the only support he had to give, his vote, to their adversaries. The rest of his political history is soon told. When the alarm had subsided he gradually came back to the Opposition party, and acted with them until his father's illness called him to the Regency, when he shamefully abandoned them, flung himself into the hands of their antagonists, and continued to the end of his days their enemy, with a relentless bitterness, a rancorous malignity, which betokened the spite of his nature, and his consciousness of having injured and betrayed those whom, therefore, he never could forgive. It was indeed the singular and unenviable fate of this Prince, that he who at various times had more "troops of friends" to surround him than any man of any age, changed them so often, and treated them so ill, as to survive, during a short part of his life, every one of his attachments, and to find himself before its close in the hands of his enemies, or of mere strangers, the accidental connections of yesterday.

After running the course of dissipation, uninterrupted by any more rational or worthy pursuit—prematurely exhausting the resources of indulgence, both animal and mental, and becoming incapable of receiving further gratification unless the wish of the ancient tyrant could be gratified by the invention of some new pleasure—it was found that a life of what was called unbounded profusion could not be passed without unlimited extravagance, and that such enormous sums had been squandered in a few years as seemed to baffle conjecture how the money could have been spent. The bill was of course brought into the country, and one of the items which swelled the total amount to above half a million, was many hundreds of pounds for Marechal powder, a perfumed brown dust with which the fops of those days filled their hair, in preference to using soap and water, after the manner of the less courtly times that succeeded the French Revolution. The discontent which this unprincipled and senseless waste of money occasioned had no effect in mending the life of its author ;

and in a few years after a new debt had been incurred, and the aid of Parliament was required again. There seemed now no chance but one, of extricating the Prince from the difficulties with which he had surrounded himself, and obtaining such an increased income as might enable him to continue his extravagance without contracting new debts. That chance was his consenting to marry; in order that the event might take place, so pleasing to a people whom all the vices and the follies of royalty can never wean from their love of Princes, and the increase of the royal family be effected with due regularity of procedure from the heir apparent's loins. But, although the entering into the state of matrimony in regular form, and with the accustomed publicity, might afford the desired facilities of a pecuniary kind, such a step little suited the taste of the illustrious personage usually termed "the hope of the country." That the restraints of wedlock should be dreaded by one to whom all restraint had hitherto been a stranger, and who could set at nought whatever obligations of constancy that holy and comfortable state imposed, was wholly out of the question. If that were all, he could have no kind of objection to take as many wives as the law of the land allowed, supposing the dower of each to be a bill upon the patient good-nature of the English people, towards discharging some mass of debt contracted. But there had happened another event, not quite suited to the people's taste, although of a matrimonial kind, which had been most carefully concealed for very sufficient reasons, and which placed him in a predicament more embarrassing even than his pecuniary difficulties.

The most excusable by far, indeed the most respectable of all the prince's attachments, had been that which he had early formed for Mrs. Fitzherbert, a woman of the most amiable qualities, and the most exemplary virtue. Her abilities were not shining, nor were her personal charms dazzling, nor was she even in the first stage of youth; but her talents were of the most engaging kind; she had a peculiarly sweet disposition, united to sterling good sense, and was possessed of manners singularly

fascinating. His passion for this excellent person was a redeeming virtue of the prince; it could only proceed from a fund of natural sense and good taste, which, had it but been managed with ordinary prudence and care, would have endowed a most distinguished character in private life; and, could it by any miracle have been well managed in a palace, must have furnished out a ruler before whose lustre the fame of Titus and the Antonines would grow pale. This passion was heightened by the difficulties which its virtuous object interposed to its gratification; and upon no other terms than marriage could that be obtained. But marriage with this admirable lady was forbidden by law! She was a Roman Catholic; sincerely attached to the religion of her forefathers, she refused to purchase a crown by conforming to any other; and the law declared, that whoever married a Catholic should forfeit all right to the crown of these realms, as if he were naturally dead. This law, however, was unknown to her, and blinded, by various pretences, he was induced to consent to a clandestine marriage, which is supposed to have been solemnized between her and the Prince beyond the limits of the English dominions, in the silly belief, perhaps, entertained by him, that he escaped the penalty to which his reckless conduct exposed him, and that the forfeiture of his succession to the crown was only denounced against such a marriage if contracted within the realm.* The consent of the Sovereign was another requisite of the law to render the marriage valid; that consent had not been obtained; and the invalidity of the contract was supposed to save the forfeiture. But they who so construed the plain provision in the Bill of Rights, assumed first, that no forfeiture could be incurred by doing an act which was void in itself, whereas the law of England, as well as of Scotland, and every other country,† abounds in cases of acts prohibited and

* Some affirm that it was performed in London at the house of her uncle.

† To lawyers this matter is quite familiar. In England, if a tenant for life makes a feoffment in fee, this forfeits his life estate,

made void, yet punished by a forfeiture of the rights of him who contravenes the prohibition, as much as if they were valid and effectual. The same courtly reasons and fraudulent matchmakers of Carlton House next assumed that statutes so solemn as the Bill of Rights and Act of Settlement could be varied, and, indeed, repealed in an essential particular, most clearly within their mischief, by a subsequent law which makes not the least reference whatever to their provisions; while no man could doubt that to prevent even the attempt at contravening those prohibitions was the object of the law, in order to prevent all risks; it being equally manifest that, if merely preventing a Catholic from being the Sovereign's consort had been the only purpose of the enactment, this could have been most effectually accomplished by simply declaring the marriage void, and the forfeiture of the crown became wholly superfluous. It is, therefore, very far from being clear that this marriage was no forfeiture of the crown. But, it may be said, the Prince ran this risk only for himself, and no one has a right to complain. Not so. The forfeiture of the crown was his own risk assuredly; but he trepanned Mrs. Fitzherbert into a sacrifice of her honour to gratify his passion, when he well knew that the ceremony which she was made to believe a marriage could only be regarded as a mere empty form, of no legal validity or effect whatever; unless, indeed, that of exposing her, and all who assisted, to the high pains and penalties of a *premunire*. While he pretended that he was making her his wife, and made her believe she was such, he was only making her the victim of his passions, and the accomplice of his crimes.

although the attempt to enlarge his estate is altogether ineffectual, and the feoffee takes nothing by the grant. In Scotland, if an heir of entail, fettered by the fencing clauses, makes a conveyance contrary to the prohibitions, the deed is wholly void, and yet he forfeits the estate, to use the words of the Bill of Rights, "as if he were naturally dead."

A few years after, when those passions had cooled, or were directed into some new channel, the rumour having got abroad, a question was asked in Parliament respecting the alleged marriage. His chosen political associates were appealed to, and, being instructed by him, denied the charge in the most unqualified terms. Before such men as Mr. Fox and Mr. Grey could thus far commit their honour, they took care to be well assured of the fact by direct personal communication with the Prince himself. He most solemnly denied the whole upon his sacred honour; and his denial was, through the most respectable channels, conveyed to the House of Commons. We are giving here a matter of history well known at the time;—a thousand times repeated since, and never qualified by the parties, nor ever contradicted on their behalf. It must be confessed, that this passage of the Prince's story made his treatment of Mrs. Fitzherbert complete in all its parts. After seducing her with a false and fictitious marriage, he refused her the poor gratification of saving her reputation, by letting the world believe he had really made her his wife. Instances are not wanting of men committing in public a breach of veracity, and sacrificing truth, to save the reputation of their paramours; nor is any moralist so stern as to visit with very severe censure conduct like this. But who was there ever yet so base as deliberately to pledge his honour to a falsehood, for the purpose of his own protection, and in order to cover with shame her whom his other false pretences had deceived into being his paramour? Bad as this is, worse remains to be told. This treachery was all for the lucre of gain; the question was raised, upon an application to Parliament for money; and the falsehood was told to smooth the difficulties that stood in the way of a vote in Committee of Supply!

The influence of Mrs. Fitzherbert gave place to another connection, but she retained that sway over his mind which we have described as the brightest feature in the Prince's character. Hence he spared no pains to make her believe that the public denial of their wedlock was only rendered necessary by his father's

prejudices and tyrannical conduct. She well knew, that to find an example of fear greater than that dread with which he quailed at the sound of his father's voice, or indeed the bare mention of his name, it was necessary to go among the many-coloured inhabitants of the Caribbee Islands; and hence she could the more easily credit the explanation given of the disclaimer so cruel to her feelings. In private, therefore, and with her, he still passed himself for her husband, and she learned, like other and more real wives, to shut her eyes upon his infidelities, while her empire over his mind remained unshaken. The pressure of new difficulties rendered a regular marriage necessary for his extrication; but as this must at once and for ever dispel all that remained of the matrimonial delusion, he long resisted the temptation, through fear of Mrs. Fitzherbert, and dread of their intercourse coming to a violent end. At length the increasing pressure of his embarrassments overweighed all other considerations, and he consented to a marriage, and to give up Mrs. Fitzherbert for ever. Others with whom he lived upon the most intimate terms are supposed to have interposed fresh obstacles to this scheme; but these were overcome by an understanding that the new wife should enjoy only the name;—that systematic neglect and insult of every kind heaped upon her should attest how little concern the heart had with this honourable arrangement, and how entirely the husband continued devoted to the wedded wives of other men. Everything was now settled to the satisfaction of all parties. The old spouse was discarded—the old mistresses were cherished, fondled, and appeased—the faithful Commons were overjoyed at the prospect of a long line of heirs to the crown—the loyal people were enraptured at the thoughts of new princes and princesses—the King, while he felt his throne strengthened by the provision made for the succession, was gratified with whatever lowered the person he most hated and despised—and the Prince himself was relieved of much debt, and endowed with augmented resources. One party alone was left out of the general considera-

tion—the intended consort of this illustrious character, whose peculiar pride it was to be called by his flatterers the “First Gentleman in Europe.”

Caroline Princess of Brunswick was the individual whom it was found convenient to make the sacrifice on this occasion to an arrangement that diffused so universal a joy through this free, moral, and reflecting country. She was niece of George III. and consequently one of the prince’s nearest relations. Nor has it ever been denied, that in her youth she was a princess of singular accomplishments, as well of mind as of person. All who had seen her in those days represented her as lovely; nor did she, on touching our shores, disappoint the expectations which those eye-witnesses had raised. All who had known her in that season of youth, and before care had become the companion of her life, and the cruelty of others had preyed upon her feelings and sapped her understanding, described her mental endowments as brilliant; and a judge, alike experienced and severely fastidious, long after she had come amongst us, continued to paint her as formed to be “the life, grace, and ornament of polished society.”* Her talents were indeed far above the ordinary level of women, and had her education not been rather below the average stock of princesses, they would have decked her in accomplishments remarkable for any station. Endowed with the greatest quickness of apprehension, with a singularly ready wit, and with such perseverance as is rarely seen in the inmates of a court, she shone in conversation, and could have excelled in higher studies than statuary, the only one to which she devoted her attention. If it be said that her buoyant spirits were little compatible with the etiquette of a German court, and made her attend less to forms than the decorum of our English palaces, under the cold and stiff reign of George and Charlotte, might seem to require—so must it be confessed, on the other hand, that no person of the exalted station to which this great lady

* Mr. Canning in the House of Commons.

was born, and the still higher elevation of rank which she afterwards reached, ever showed such entire freedom from all haughtiness and pride, or more habitually estimated all who approached her by their intrinsic merits. The first duchess in the land, or the humblest of its peasants, were alike welcome to her, if their endowments and their dispositions claimed her regard; and, if by the accident of birth she was more frequently thrown into the fellowship of the one, she could relish the talk, seek out the merits, admire the virtues, and interest herself in the fortunes of the other, without ever feeling the difference of their rank, even so far as to betray in her manner that she was honouring them by her condescension. Thus, all might well be charmed with her good-nature, lively humour, and kindly demeanour, while no one ever thought of praising her affability.

But Caroline of Brunswick had far higher qualities than these; she put forward, in the course of her hapless and checkered existence, claims of a much loftier caste. She had a delight in works of beneficence that made charity the very bond of her existence; nor were the sufferings of her life unconnected with this amiable propensity of her nature. Her passionate fondness for children, balked by that separation from her only offspring to which she was early doomed, led her into the unwise course of adopting the infants of others, which she cherished as if they had been her own. Her courage was of the highest order of female bravery, scorning all perils in the pursuit of worthy objects, leading her certainly into adventures that were chiefly recommended by their risks, but, like the active courage of a woman, suffering occasionally intervals of suspension according to the state of the animal spirits, possibly influenced by the physical constitution of the female frame, although the passive virtue of fortitude never knew abatement or eclipse. There were occasions, indeed, when her two distinguishing characteristics were both called forth in unison, and her brave nature ministered to her charity. While travelling in the East,

the plague broke out among her suite. Unappalled by a peril which has laid prostrate the stoutest hearts, she entered the hospital, and set to others the example of attending upon the sick, regardless of even the extreme risk which she ran by hanging over their beds and touching their persons. Let it be added to this, that her nature was absolutely without malice or revenge; that she hardly knew the merit of forgiveness of injuries, because it cost her nothing; and that a harsh expression, a slanderous aspersion, any indication of hatred or of spite, never broke from her, even when the resources of ingenuity were exhausted in order to goad her feelings, and self-defence almost made anger and resentment a duty.

It will be said that the fair side is here presented of this remarkable picture—remarkable if the original were found in a cottage, but in a palace little short of miraculous. If, however, there be so fair a side to the portraiture, shall it not turn away the wrath that other features may possibly raise on reversing the medal? But that is not the defence, nor even the palliation, which belongs to this unparalleled case. Was ever human being so treated—above all, was ever woman so treated as this woman had been—visited with severe censure if she at some time fell into the snares at all times laid for her undoing? Were ever faults made next to unavoidable, by systematic persecution in all matters down to the most trifling from the most grave, regarded as inexpiable, or only to be expiated by utter destruction? It is one of the grossest and most unnatural of the outrages against all justice, to say nothing of charity, which despots and other slave-owners commit, that they visit on their hapless victims the failings which their oppressions burn as it were into the character—that they affect disgust and reprobation at what is their own handiwork—and assume from the vices they have themselves engendered a new right to torment whom they have degraded. These men can never learn the lessons of inspired wisdom, and lay their account with reaping as they have sowed. Were a tyrant to assume some strange caprice,

by grafting the thorn upon the vine-tree, or placing the young dove among vultures to be reared, surely it would surpass even the caprice of a tyrant, and his proverbial contempt of all reason beyond his own will, were he to complain that he could no longer gather grapes from the plant, and that the perverted nature of the dove thirsted for blood. Did any parent, unnatural enough to turn his child among gipsies, ever prove so senseless or unreasonable as to complain of the dishonest habits his offspring had acquired? By what title, then, shall a husband, who, after swearing upon the altar to love, protect, and cherish his wife, casts her away from him, and throws her into whatever society may beset her in a strange country, pretend to complain of incorrect demeanour, when it is no fault of his that there remains in the bosom of his victim one vestige of honesty, purity, or of honour? It is not denied, it cannot be denied, that levities little suited to her station marked the conduct of the Princess; that unworthy associates sometimes found admittance to her presence; that in the hands of intriguing women she became a tool of their silly, senseless plots; that, surrounded by crafty politicians, she suffered her wrongs to be used as the means of gratifying a place-hunting ambition, which rather crawled than climbed; and that a character naturally only distinguished by mere heedless openness, and a frankness greater than common prudence seems to justify in those who dwell in palaces, became shaded, if not tarnished, by a disposition to join in unjustifiable contrivances for self-defence. But the heavy charges of guilt brought against her, in two several investigations, were triumphantly repelled, and by the universal assent of mankind scattered in the wind, amidst their unanimous indignation; and from the blame of lesser faults and indiscretions into which she is admitted to have been betrayed, the least regard to the treatment she met with must, in the contemplation of all candid minds, altogether set her free.

No sooner was the marriage solemnized, which plunged the country into unmixed joy, and raised a mingled expectation and sneer among the population of the court,

than the illustrious husband proceeded to the most exemplary, and indeed scrupulous fulfilment of his vows—but not those made at the altar. There were others of a prior date, to which, with the most rigorous sense of justice, he therefore gave the preference;—performing them with an exactness even beyond the strict letter of the engagement. It is true they were not quite consistent with the later obligations “to love, cherish, and protect;” but they were vows notwithstanding, and had been attested with many oaths, and fierce imprecations, and accompanied with a touching and a copious effusion of tears. Their purport was an engagement to reject, to hate, and to insult the wedded wife; to yield her rivals, not unwedded, but the helpmates of other lords, the preference on all occasions; to crown the existence of the one with all favour, and affection, and respect, while that of the other should be made wretched and unbearable by every slight which could be given, every outrage which could be offered to the feelings most tyrannical over the female bosom. Swift followed, then, upon the making of the second and public vow, the punctual fulfilment of the first and private obligation. Never did the new-married pair meet but in the presence of others, the princess was treated on every occasion, but most on public occasions, with ostentatious neglect, nay, with studied contumely; each resource of ingenious spite was exhausted in devising varied means of exhibiting her position in melancholy contrast with the empire of her rivals: when she submitted, trampled upon as dastardly and mean; when she was reluctantly goaded into self-defence, run down and quelled and punished as contumacious; and as soon as maltreatment was suspected to have begotten the desire of retaliation, she was surrounded with spies, that not a gesture or a look, a word or a sigh, might pass unregistered, unexaggerated, unperturbed. Yet no one incident could be found upon which to hang the slightest charge of impropriety. Witness the necessity to which the Whig friends of Carlton-House were reduced (for want of other blame), of complaining that the sympathy of the people had been

awaked in behalf of the persecuted and defenceless stranger ; and that she did not shun occasions of seeing her only friend, the people, so carefully as the Whig notion of female propriety deemed fitting, or the Carlton-House standard of conjugal delicacy required.

At the end of a tedious and sorrowful year, the birth of the Princess Charlotte once more intoxicated the nation with loyal joy, and made it forget as well the silent sorrows of the one parent, as the perfidious cruelty of the other. Scarce had the mother recovered, when a fresh and unheard-of outrage greeted her returning health. The "First Gentleman of his Age" was pleased, under his own hand, to intimate that it suited his disposition no longer to maintain even the thin covering of decency which he had hitherto suffered to veil the terms of their union ; he announced that they should now live apart ; and added, with a refinement of delicacy suited to the finished accomplishments of his pre-eminence among gentlemen, that he pledged himself never to ask for a nearer connection, even if their only child should die—he added, with a moving piety, "Which God forbid!"—in case it might be imagined that the death of the daughter was as much his hope as the destruction of the mother. The separation thus delicately effected made only an apparent change in the relative position of the parties. They had before occupied the same house, because they had lived under one roof, but in a state of complete separation ; and now the only difference was, that, instead of making a partition of the dwelling, and assigning her one half of its interior, he was graciously pleased to make a new division of the same mansion, giving her the outside, and keeping the inside to his mistresses and himself.

The incessant vigilance with which the unhappy Princess's conduct was now watched, by eyes ready to minister fictions to those who employed them, soon produced a report that their prey had fallen into the appointed snare. It was duly represented to the "Most amiable Prince of his times," living with his paramours, that the wife whom he had discarded for their society, and to whom he had given what the head of the

law, his comrade and adviser,* scrupled not to term “a Letter of License,” had followed his example, and used the license; in short, that she had been secretly delivered of a child. No intrigue had been denounced as detected by the spies; nor could any person be fixed on as he who had committed high treason by defiling the solitary bed to which the “Companion of the King’s son,”† had been condemned by her tender and faithful consort. The charge, however, was made, and it was minutely investigated,—not by the friends of the accused, but by the political and the personal associates of her husband. The result was her complete and triumphant acquittal of all but the charge that she had, to vary the monotony of her sequestered life, adopted the child of a sailmaker in the neighbourhood of her residence; thus endeavouring to obtain for her own daughter’s society a substitute upon whom the natural instinct of maternal feeling might find a vent, to relieve an overburthened heart. It was little creditable, certainly, to the Commissioners who conducted this “Delicate Investigation,” as it was termed, that they stooped to mention levities of conduct wholly immaterial, and confessedly quite inoffensive in her, while they cautiously abstained from pronouncing any censure upon the guilt of the other party, by whose faithlessness and cruelty her existence had been rendered a scene of misery.

In those days the accidental distributions of party had made the Princess acquainted with the most eminent of the Tory chiefs—Lord Eldon, Mr. Perceval, and Mr. Canning. These distinguished personages composed her familiar society, and they were her faithful counsellors through all her difficulties. Nor would it have been easy to find men on whom she could more safely rely for powerful assistance as advocates, or able advice as friends. They prepared an elaborate statement of the Princess’s case, which accidental circumstances kept them from making public; but enough of the proceeding

* Lord Thurlow.

† *La Compagne Fitz le Roy*—says the Statute of Treasons.

transpired to make the country aware of the extraordinary course which had been pursued by the Princess's political friends.

It is difficult to describe the sensation which the Report of the Secret Tribunal made wherever a knowledge of its contents reached. That a wife, a Princess, and stranger, should be subjected to treatment the most cruel and unmanly, should then be driven from the shelter of her husband's roof, should be surrounded by spies and false witnesses, and having been charged with a capital offence—nay, with high treason—should be tried behind her back, with the most able counsel to attend on behalf of her persecutor and accuser, without a human being present on her behalf, so much as to cross-examine a witness, or even to take a note of the evidence—was a proceeding which struck all men's minds with astonishment and dismay, and seemed rather to approach the mockery of all justice presented in the accounts of eastern seraglios, than to resemble anything that is known among nations living under constitutional Governments. But if the investigation itself was thus an object of reprobation and disgust, its result gave, if possible, less satisfaction still. What could be said of a sentence which showed that, even when tried behind her back, and by an invisible tribunal formed wholly of her adversaries, not the shadow of guilt could be found in her whole conduct; and that even the mercenary fancies and foul perjuries of the spies had failed to present any probable matter of blame; and yet, instead of at once pronouncing her innocent and unjustly accused, begrudged her the poor satisfaction of an acquittal, and, fearful of affording her the triumph to which innocence is entitled, and offending the false accuser, both passed over all mention of her unparalleled wrongs, and left a stigma upon her name, by the vague recommendation that the King should advise her concerning certain levities or indiscretions of behaviour—an allusion so undefined, that any one might fill up the dark outline as his imagination should enable him, or his want of common charity prompt him to do? Every one knew that, had

there been the least tangible impropriety, though falling far short of guilt, it would have been stated in the Report; but the purposes of the accuser, to which the secret judges lent themselves, were best served by a vague and mysterious generality, that meant everthing, and anything, as well as nothing, and enabled him to propagate by his hireling favourites, all over society, any new slanders which he might choose to invent.

The confirmed insanity of the King, three years afterwards, called to the Regency the chief actor in these unhappy scenes. No prince ever ascended the throne with so universal a feeling of distrust, and even aversion. Nor was this lessened when the first act of his reign proved him as faithless to his political friends as he had been to his wife; and as regardless of his professed public principles as he had been of his marriage vows. It added little respect to the disesteem in which he was so universally held, that he was seen to discard all the liberal party with whom he had so long acted; with whom, after an interval of separation, he had become again intimately united, and among them the very men who had stood by him in his domestic broils; whilst he took into full favour his determined enemies, and, worst of all, the very men who had prepared attacks upon him too outrageous to find a publisher!

The accession of the Princess's friends to the Regent's favour was the period of their intercourse with their former client. Not the slightest communication could now be held with her whose just quarrel they had so warmly espoused while the Prince was their antagonist; and Mr. Canning alone of them all, to his transcendent honour, refused to pay the tribute exacted by the court of deserting a former friend, because an enemy had been found placable; and because, he, setting too high a value upon his forgiveness, required his new favourites to be as perfidious as himself.

It is impossible to separate from the history of George IV. that of his wife, for it is united with the most remarkable features of his character; his bound-

less caprice—his arbitrary nature—his impatience of contradiction and restraint—his recklessness of consequences when resolved to attain a private end—qualities which, if guided by a desire of compassing greater ends and sustained by adequate courage, would have aroused a struggle for absolute power, fatal either to the liberties of the country, or to the existence of the monarchy.

The Princess of Wales, wearied out with unceasing persecution, had gone abroad, leaving behind her, as the only support on which she could rely, her only daughter, disease having deprived her of the steady favour and undeviating support of the King, her father-in-law and uncle. The death of both that King and that daughter was the signal of new attempts against her peace. The history of the Milan Commission is fresh in the recollection of all. A board of three persons—a Chancery lawyer, who had never seen a witness examined, and whose practice was chiefly confined to cases in bankruptcy, on which he had written an excellent book—a colonel in the army, who knew but little more of the matter—an active and clever attorney—composed this select body, commissioned to hunt for evidence which might convict the future Queen, and be ready to overwhelm her if she asserted her right to share her consort's throne.

Sir John Leach was an active adviser of all these nefarious proceedings; nor could all England, certainly not all its bar, have produced a more unsafe counsellor. With great quickness of parts, an extraordinary power of fixing his attention upon an argument, and following steadily its details, a rare faculty of neat and lucid statement, even of the most entangled and complicated facts, considerable knowledge of legal principles, and still greater acquaintance with equity practice, he was singularly ignorant of the world, and had no kind of familiarity with the rules of the practice of evidence in the courts of common or criminal law. Moderately learned even in his own profession, beyond it he was one of the most ignorant men that

ever appeared at the bar. Yet, by industry, and some art of gaining favour, by making himself useful to the powerful and the wealthy, little scrupulous how much he risked in any way to serve them, he had struggled with the defects of a mean birth and late adoption into the rank he afterwards so greatly affected; and he had arrived at extensive practice. “Nullum ille poetam noverat, nullum legerat oratorem, nullam memoriam antiquitatis collegerat: non publicum jus, non privatum et civile* cognoverat.—Is omnibus exemplo debet esse quantum in hâc urbe polleat multorum obedire tempori, multorumque vel honori, vel periculo servire. His enim rebus, infimo loco natus, et honores, et pecuniam, et gratiam consecutus, etiam in patronorum sine doctrinâ, sine ingenio, aliquem numerum pervenerat.” (Cic. *Brutus*.) The power of deciding causes, which he showed when raised to the bench, was favourably contrasted with the dilatory and doubting habits of Lord Eldon; but there was much of what Lord Bacon calls “affected despatch” in his proceedings; and while he appeared to regard the number of judgments which he pronounced in a given time far more than their quality, he left it to his learned chief to complain that cases were decided at the Rolls, but heard when they came by appeal before the Chancellor: while the wits, calling one the court of *oyer sans terminer*, named the other that of *terminer sans oyer*; and a great and candid critic (Sir S. Romilly) professed himself, to Lord Eldon’s extreme delight, better pleased with the tardy justice of the principal than with the swift injustice of the deputy. The ridicule which he threw around his conduct in society, by his childish devotion to the pursuits of fashionable life, in which neither his early habits nor his turn of mind fitted him to excel, was another result derived from the same want of sound judgment. But its first fruit was that unhesitating and overweening confidence in his own opinion, which exceeded that of any other man, and perpetually led both himself and his clients astray. Uncontrolled con-

* Equity, *jus prætorium*, is not very clearly here excluded.

ceit, a contracted understanding that saw quickly and correctly very near objects, and disbelieved in the existence of all beyond, conspired with a temper peculiarly irascible, to give him this habit of forming his opinion instantaneously, and this pertinacity in adhering to it, excluding all the light that could afterwards be let in upon the subject. The same hasty and sanguine temperament made him exceedingly prone to see matters as he wished them to be; and when he had a client whom he desired to gratify, or for whom he felt a strong interest, his advice became doubly dangerous; because, in addition to his ordinary infirmities of judgment, he formed his opinion under all the bias of his wishes, while he gave it and adhered to it without running any hazard in his own person. His courage, both personal and political, was frequently commended; but there may be some doubt if to the latter praise he was justly entitled. His personal gallantry, indeed, was quite unquestionable, and it was severely tried in the painful surgical operations to which he submitted with an ease that showed the risk and the suffering cost him little. But the peculiarity of his character that made him so wise in his own conceit, and lessened the value of his counsels, also detracted much from the merit of his moral courage, by keeping him blind to difficulties and dangers, the presence or the approach of which could be discovered by all eyes but his own.

Such was the counsellor whom the Regent trusted, and who was as sure to mislead him as ever man was that undertook to advise another. The wishes of his great client were well known to him; his disrelish for the caution, and the doubts, and the fears of Lord Eldon had been oftentimes freely expressed; Sir John Leach easily saw every part of the case as the Regent wished—quickly made up his mind on the pleasing side—set himself in the same advantageous contrast with the Chancellor on this, as he delighted to do on more ordinary occasions—and because he perceived that he delighted the royal consultor at present, never doubted that his successful conduct of the affair would enable

him to supplant his superior, and to clutch the Great Seal itself. The possibility of royal ingratitude never entered his narrow mind, any more than that of his own opinion being erroneous; nor did he conceive it within the nature of things, that in one respect the client should resemble his adviser, namely, in retaining his predilection only so long as measures were found to succeed, and in making the counsellor responsible in his own person for the failure of all from whom anything had ever been expected. Under these hopeful auspices, the most difficult and delicate affair ever yet undertaken by statesmen was approached; and while, under the sanguine counsels of Sir John, no one of the conspirators ever thought of questioning the success of their case, another question was just as little asked among them, which yet was by far the most important of all—Whether, supposing the case proved against the Princess, the conspirators were one hair's-breadth nearer the mark of effecting her ruin, or whether that first success would not bring them only nearer to their own.

The Milan Commission proceeded under this superintendence, and as its labours, so were its fruits exactly what might have been expected. It is among foreigners the first impression always arising from any work undertaken by English hands and paid for by English money, that an inexhaustible fund is employed, and with boundless profusion; and a thirst of gold is straightway excited which no extravagance of liberality can slake. The knowledge that a Board was sitting to collect evidence against the Queen immediately gave such testimony a high value in the market of Italian perjury; and happy was the individual who had ever been in her house or admitted to her presence; his fortune was counted to be made. Nor were they who had viewed her mansion, or had only known the arrangements of her villa, without hopes of sharing in the golden prize. To have even seen her pass and noted who attended her person, was a piece of good luck. In short, nothing, however remotely connected with herself, or her family, or her residence, or

her habits, was without its value among a poor, a sanguine, and an imaginative people. It is certain that no more ready way of proving a case, like the charge of criminal intercourse, can be found, than to have it first broadly asserted for a fact; because, this being once believed, every motion, gesture, and look is at once taken as proof of the accusation, and the two most innocent of human beings may be overwhelmed with a mass of circumstances, almost all of which, as well as the inferences drawn from them, are really believed to be true by those who recount or record them. As the treachery of servants was the portion of this testimony which bore the highest value, that, of course, was not difficult to procure; and the accusers soon possessed what, in such a case, may most truly be said to be *accusatori maxime optandum*—not, indeed, *confitentes reos*, but the man-servant of the one, and the maid-servant of the other supposed paramour. Nor can we look back upon these scenes without some little wonder how they should not have added even the *confitentem reum*; for surely in a country so fertile of intriguing men and abandoned women—where false oaths, too, grow naturally, or with only the culture of a gross ignorance and a superstitious faith—it might have been easy, we should imagine, to find some youth like Smeaton in the original Harry the Eighth's time, ready to make his fortune, both in money and female favours, by pretending to have enjoyed the affections of one whose good-nature and easy manners made the approach to her person no difficult matter at any time. This defect in the case can only be accounted for by supposing that the production of such a witness before the English public might have appeared somewhat perilous, both to himself and to the cause he was brought to prop with his perjuries.

Accordingly, recourse was had to spies, who watched all the parties did, and, when they could not find a circumstance, would make one; men who chronicled the dinners and the suppers that were eaten, the walks and the sails that were enjoyed, the arrangements of rooms

and the position of bowers, and who, never doubting that these were the occasions and the scenes of endearment and of enjoyment, pretended to have witnessed the one, in order that the other might be supposed ; but with that inattention to particulars which Providence has appointed as the snare for the false witness, and the safeguard of innocence, pretended to have seen in such directions as would have required the rays of light to move not straightforward, but roundabout. Couriers that pried into carriages where the travellers were asleep at gray daylight, or saw in the dusk of dewy eve what their own fancy pictured—sailors who believed that all persons could gratify their animal appetites on the public deck, where themselves had so often played the beast's part—lying waiting-women, capable of repaying the kindness and charity that had laid the foundation of their fortune, with the treachery that could rear it to the height of their sordid desires—chambermaids, the refuse of the streets and the common food of wayfaring licentiousness, whose foul fancy could devour every mark that beds might, but did not, present to their practised eye—lechers of either sex, who would fain have gloated over the realities of what their liquorish imagination alone bodied forth—pimps of hideous aspect, whose prurient glance could penetrate through the keyhole of rooms where the rat shared with the bug the silence of the deserted place—these were the performers whose exploits the Milan Commissioners chronicled, whose narratives they collected, and whose exhibition upon the great stage of the first tribunal of all the earth they sedulously and zealously prepared by frequent rehearsal. Yet, with all these helps to success, with the unlimited supply of fancy and of falsehood which the character of the people furnished, with the very body-servants of the parties hired by their wages, if not bought with a price—such an array could only be produced as the whole world at once pronounced insufficient to support any case, and as even the most prejudiced of assemblies in the accuser's favour turned from with disgust.

The arrival of the Queen in this country, on the ac-

cession of George IV., was the signal for proceeding against her. A *green bag* was immediately sent down to the two Houses of Parliament, containing the fruits of the Milanese researches; and a Bill of Pains and Penalties was prepared for her destruction. Such was the proceeding of the Court, remarkable enough, certainly in itself—sufficiently prompt—abundantly daring—and unquestionably pregnant with grave consequences. The proceeding of the country was more prompt, more decided, and more remarkable still. The people all in one voice demurred to the Bill. They said, “Suppose all to be true which her enemies allege, we care not; she was ill-used; she was turned out of her husband’s house; she was persecuted; denied the rights of a wife as well as of a mother; she was condemned to live the life of the widow and the childless, that he who should have been her comforter might live the life of an adulterous libertine; and she shall not be trampled down and destroyed to satiate his vengeance or humour his caprice.” This was the universal feeling that occupied the country. Had the whole facts as charged been proved by a cloud of unimpeachable witnesses, such would have been the universal verdict of that country, the real jury which was to try this great cause; and so wide of their object would the accusers have found themselves at the very moment when they would have fancied the day their own. This all men of sense and reflection saw; this the Ministers saw; this, above all, the sagacious Chancellor very clearly saw with the sure and quick eye which served his long and perspicacious head; but this Sir John Leach never could be brought for a moment even to comprehend, acute as he was, nor could his royal friend be made to conceive it; because, though both acute men, they were utterly blinded by the passions that domineered in the royal breast and the conceited arrogance that inspired the vulgar adviser.

But if the Ministers saw all these things, and if they moreover were well aware—as who was not?—that the whole country was excited to a pitch of rage and indignation bordering upon rebellion, and that the

struggle, if persisted in against a people firmly resolved to stand between the Court and its prey, must hurry them into wide-spreading insurrection—how, it will be asked, was it possible that those Ministers—whose hatred of the bill must have been as great as their apprehension of its consequences were grave, and who had not the shadow of an interest in its fate, except that it should instantly be abandoned—could be brought to sanction a proceeding fraught not only with every mischief to the country, but with the extremest peril to themselves? The great difficulty of answering this question must be confessed; nor is it lessened by the reflection that at the head of the Government in those days there were men whose prudence was more striking than any other quality; men cautious, unpretending, commonplace, and loving place, like Lord Liverpool; wary, cold, circumspect, though of unflinching courage, like Lord Castlereagh; far-sighted, delighting in seeing all difficulties that existed, and many that did not, like Lord Eldon; above all, so firm-minded a man as the Duke of Wellington—a man, too, so honourable in all his feelings, and so likely to influence the councils, if he failed to turn aside the desires, of the Sovereign. The defenders of the Ministers never affected to doubt the mischievous nature of the whole proceeding; they admitted all their opinions to be strongly and decidedly against it; they saw, and confessed that they saw, all the dangers to which it exposed the country; they did not deny that it was the mere personal wish of the King; and that it was the bounden duty, as well as the undoubted interest of his Ministers, peremptorily to refuse their assistance to such a wicked and hopeless project;—admitting, all the while, that as the bill never could be carried through and executed, all the agitation with which so monstrous an attempt was convulsing the country had absolutely not a chance of success, in so far as concerned the King's object. Then, what reason did they assign for the Ministers lending themselves to such an enormity? It seems incredible, but it is true, that the only ground ever hinted at was the King's fixed

determination, and the risk his Ministers ran of losing their places if they thwarted him in his favourite pursuit? Yes, as if the loss of office was like the loss of life, and they had no power of refusing, because refusal was death, they crouched to that command, rather than yield to which, men of integrity and of firmness would have faced death itself. It is certain, that had the Duke of Wellington been longer in civil life, and attained his due weight in the councils of the Government, he would have taken this and no other view of the question; but it is equally certain that the Ministers at large betrayed the same submissive obedience to their master's will, showed the same dread of facing his displeasure, which unnerves the slaves of the Eastern tyrant when his voice echoes through the vaults of the seraglio, or casts them prostrate before his feet, as the scimitar's edge glances in their eye, and the bowstring twangs in their ear.

The course taken by the leading supporters of the Queen rendered the conduct of the Government still more despicable. It was early announced by Mr. Brougham in the House of Commons that nothing could be more safe than for the Ministers to refuse carrying through the bill, because, if the Regent, after that, should venture to dismiss them on account of their refusal, no man among their adversaries would venture to take office from which the former occupants had been driven for refusing to abandon their duty, and flying in the people's face. The Regent at once perceived the tendency of this announcement; and he met it in the only way that could be devised for counter-acting that tendency. He gave his ministers to understand, that if he turned them out for refusing to go on with the bill, he should take their adversaries into their places without requiring them to adopt or support it. The contrivance was certainly not without ingenuity; but a little reflection must have satisfied even the most timorous place-holder that he had little to fear from so senseless a resolution, and that, as long as the Whigs refused to outbid them for the royal favour in the only stock which had any value at Carlton House, support of the

bill, there was no chance whatever of their being taken into office on any other terms. There surely must be something in official life as sweet as natural life is supposed to be, and something peculiarly horrible to statesmen in the bare possibility of political death—else why this pleasing hope, this fond desire, this longing after longevity—or why this dread of dissolution that makes the soul shrink back upon itself? But in one material particular the two kinds of life and death widely differ. The official's death-bed is not cheered by any hopes of immortality. The world to which he now looks forward is another, but not a better world. He knows full sure that, from the pleasing state of being to which he has been so long used and so fondly clings, he must instantly, on the great change taking place, be plunged into the dreary night of a placeless existence; be cast away with other mournful ghosts on the tempest-beaten coast of Opposition, there to wander uncertain of ever again being summoned from that inhospitable shore, or visiting the cheerful glimpses of the courtly day. Hence it is, that while men of ordinary powers are daily seen to meet death in the breach for honour or patriotism, hardly any can be found, even among the foremost men of any age, whose nerves are firm enough to look in the face the termination of official existence; and none but one bereft of his senses ever makes himself a voluntary sacrifice for his principles or his country. The ministers of 1820 numbered not among them any one so void of political reason as to follow Mr. Canning's noble example, and all were resolved to forego the discharge of every duty, and incur, both then and ever after, the loudest reproaches, rather than put to hazard the existence of the Administration.

The people, we have said, in one voice Demurred to the Bill, and plainly indicated that, if every tittle of the charges against the Queen were proved, or were admitted to be true, they would not suffer her to be sacrificed to the rage of one who had no right whatever to complain of her conduct were it ever so bad. But this feeling did not prevent them from also being

prepared, in justice towards her character, to take issue upon the fact; and accordingly the trial before the Lords was looked to with the most universal and painful anxiety, though with a confidence which nothing could shake. After a strenuous but unavailing attempt to arrest the progress of the measure, and fling out the bill on the first reading, her Majesty's counsel, Mr. Brougham, her Attorney, and Mr. Denman, her Solicitor-General, prepared to resist it upon the merits of the case, to meet the evidence of the Milan Commissioners, and to defend their august client from every accusation.* An adjournment of some weeks was allowed the promoters of the measure to prepare their case; the Parliament, instead of the usual prorogation, remained sitting, though the Commons adjourned from time to time; and the 17th of August was fixed for the opening of this extraordinary cause. All that public expectation and anxiety excited to the highest pitch could lend of interest to any trial, was here combined, with the unexampled attendance daily of almost all the Peers of the empire, the assistance of all the judges of the land, the constant presence of the Commons, a vast concourse of spectators. The Queen several times proceeded to the House in state, accompanied by her suite; and occupied a seat near her counsel, but within the bar. The Nobles best known to the surrounding multitude were greeted on their way to and from Westminster with expressions of popular feeling, friendly or hostile, according as they were known to take part with or against her Majesty; but, on the whole, extraordinary tranquillity prevailed. This was very much owing to the undoubted confidence of a favourable result, which kept possession of the people from the very first; for when the deposition of the chief witness against the Queen had proved very detrimental to her case, and her adversaries were exulting before his cross-examination had destroyed his credit, very alarming indications of irritation and rage were perceived, extend-

* Her other counsel were Mr. Justice Williams, Mr. Serjeant Wilde, and Dr. Lushington.

ing from the people to the troops then forming the garrison of the capital. Nor were there wanting those who judged it fortunate for the peace of the empire and the stability of the throne, that so popular a Prince and so very determined a man as the Duke of Kent was not then living to place himself at the head of the Queen's party, espoused as that was by the military no less than by the civil portion of the community.

After great and memorable displays of eloquence and professional skill on all sides, it was found that the case had failed entirely; and the bill, which for so many months had agitated the whole country, was at length, on the 7th of November, withdrawn. It is said that the advisers of the Queen were dissatisfied with the conduct of that party to which they, generally speaking, belonged, the Whigs—because these might have much more shortly made an end of the case. There were several periods in the proceeding which offered the firmest ground for that great and powerful body to act with decisive effect; espousing as it did the right side of the question, but espousing it feebly, and not very consistently. If at any of those points they had made a strenuous resistance, and refused to proceed farther, though they might have been defeated by a small majority, the conductors of the Queen's case would have at once withdrawn from a proceeding which presented daily to the indignant world the spectacle, most abhorrent to every right feeling, of justice outraged no less in form than in substance. Had they retired from this scene of mockery and vexation, the country was so entirely with them, that the lords never would have ventured to proceed in their absence.* But fate ordered it otherwise: the whole

* The difficulties in which the Whig leaders then were placed hardly fell short of those of the ministers. Than Lord Grey's whole conduct nothing could be more noble: whether the powers which he displayed or the honest independence of his demeanour be regarded. But we must restrain ourselves from the subject, so inviting, of sketching that amiable, honourable, and highly gifted person's character—offering such a brilliant contrast to many of whom we have spoken. Long, very long may it be before so irreparable a loss brings him within the province of history!

case on both sides was exhausted to the very dregs; and the accusation failing, the ministers were fain, on carrying one vote by only a majority of seven, to withdraw their master's bill and leave him to himself. There is every reason to believe that they were too happy to have so good a pretence for sounding a retreat from their hazardous position; and they rested satisfied with allowing the king to continue the same petty warfare of annoyance and insult in which the royal veteran had formerly reaped so many laurels, only refusing him any more bills of attainder.

Under such aggressions upon her peace and the comforts of all her associates and supporters, after a struggle of less than a year, the gallant nature sunk, which had borne up against all neglect, braved the pitiless storms of incessant annoyance, and finally triumphed over the highest perils with which persecution could surround her. The people continued firmly her friend, but the upper classes were, as usual, found unable to face the frowns, or resist the blandishments of the court. As long as the interest of the contest continued, and popular favour could be gained by taking the right side, these aristocratic partisans could defy, or thought they could defy, the royal displeasure. But when the excitement had subsided, and no precise object seemed furthered by any more popularity, they were disposed, some to regain lost favour elsewhere, almost all to avoid widening the breach. There would be no use in concealing the truth, were it not already well known; the Queen's circle became daily more and more contracted; her cause was as much as ever allowed to be that of right and justice: her husband's conduct that of a tyrant destitute alike of feeling and of honour; but he was powerful, and she was weak; so the sentiment most generally felt was, that the subject was irksome, that it might as well now be dropped, that there were never such atrocities as the Prince had committed, nor such balls as he well and wisely gave from time to time, and that, if the sense of public duty commanded votes and speeches against the bill in either house of Parliament, a

feeling of what was due to near and dear relatives dictated the private duty of eschewing all that could close against their fashionable families the doors of Carlton House. In this state of the public mind, the resolution of the Queen once more to leave a country where her lot had been so wretched, would, upon its being disclosed, have produced very different effects in the various parts of the community. The people would have felt general concern, probably great, perhaps just displeasure ; the aristocracy, even its liberal members, would have rejoiced at the removal of an irksome inconvenience. This plan, when on the eve of being carried into execution, was frustrated by her majesty's death. Exhausted by continued and unremitted persecution, and suffering severely by the signal failure of an attempt to attend the coronation, ill-devised and worse executed, because planned against the peremptory remonstrances of her law advisers, and executed without any of her accustomed firmness of purpose, she was stricken with a malady that baffled all the resources of the medical art, and expired, after declaring to her chief adviser, in an affecting interview, that she was happy to die, for life had never been to her any enjoyment since her early years, and was now become a heavy burthen.

It is remarkable that the extreme fondness for young children which had twice before led her into trouble, should have caused her to do the only reprehensible act of her latter days.* The adoption of the sailmaker's

* In the acts which caused this celebrated Princess to be sometimes taxed with the habitual ingratitude of her *caste*, something may always be allowed for inconsistency and want of reflection. A striking instance of this occurred on the defeat of the bill, in 1820. Mr. Brougham waited upon her to announce it, and tender his congratulations. She instantly said that there was a sum of 7000*l.* at Mr. D. Kinnaird's (the banker's), which she desired him to take, and distribute 4000*l.* of it among his learned coadjutors. This he of course refused. Her majesty would take no refusal, but the day after recurred to the subject, and insisted on his laying her commands before her other counsel. They all joined in the respectful refusal. A few weeks after, Mr. Kinnaird suggested that the salaries of her law officers were in arrear, they never having been paid :

child had led to the "Delicate Investigation," as it was called, of 1806; the delight she took in the child of one of her attendants, when in Italy, was the cause of all the favour which the father enjoyed in her household; and now her love of the child of her chaplain induced her to make room for the parents in her establishment, removing Lord and Lady Hood, whose services during her last persecution had been all that the most devoted attachment could render, and whose rank fitted them for the place according to the strictness of court etiquette. It is matter worthy of observation, that during the three hours of wandering which immediately preceded her decease, the names of any of the persons with whom she had been accused of improper conduct never escaped her lips; while she constantly spoke of those children—a remarkable circumstance, if it be considered that the control of reason and discretion was then wholly withdrawn.

The body of the Queen lay in state at her villa near Hammersmith, and was conveyed through the metropolis attended by countless multitudes of the people. The Regent was then in Dublin, receiving those expressions of loyal affection in which our Irish fellow-subjects so lavishly deal, more especially when they are filled with expectations of thereby gaining some favourite object. Indeed, Mr. O'Connell himself, in consideration that money enough had not been spent in providing palaces, headed a proposition for building a mansion by subscription; but this, like so many other promises and threats, proved mere noise and bluster, not one farthing having ever been subscribed, nor any one step, probably, taken, after all this vapour. The Ministers, therefore, in their Master's absence, and having no orders from him, could only conjecture his wishes and act accordingly. They therefore called out the troops to prevent the funeral

The sum was under 200*l.*, but she peremptorily refused to have it paid off—and both this arrear, and all their other professional emoluments, on the ordinary scale, were first paid after her decease by the treasury, among the other expenses of the cause!

procession from passing through the city, and a struggle ensued with the people, which ended in the loss of life. Except that the funeral was turned aside at Hyde Park, this unjustifiable proceeding produced no effect; for, after moving along part of the New Road, it came back, supported by a countless multitude, and entered the Strand near Temple Bar, so as to traverse the whole city. The inscription upon the coffin, dictated by the Queen herself—"Caroline of Brunswick, the murdered Queen of England"—made some ecclesiastical authorities refuse it admission into the churches, on its way to the port of embarkation, where it arrived, accompanied by the executors—Mr. Sergeant Wilde and Dr. Lushington, attending the remains of their royal client to the place of her final repose in Brunswick. The indecent haste with which the journey to Harwich was performed excited indignation in all, surprise in none. Nor was there perhaps ever witnessed a more striking or a more touching scene than the embarkation displayed. Thousands of all ranks thickly covered the beach; the sea, smooth as glass, was alive with boats and vessels of every size, their colours floating halfmast high, as on days consecrated to mourning; the sun shone forth with a brightness which made a contrast to the gloom that shrouded every face; the sound of the guns booming across the water at intervals impressed the solemnity upon the ear. Captains, grown gray in their country's service, were seen to recall the Princess's kindness and charities, whereof they had been the witnesses or the ministers, unable to restrain the tears that poured along their scarred cheeks. At length the crimson coffin was seen slowly to descend from the crowded pier, and the barge that received it wheeled through the water, while the gorgeous flag of England floated over the remains of the "murdered Queen," whose sufferings had so powerfully awakened the English people's sympathy, and whose dust they now saw depart from their shores forever, to mingle with the ashes of an illustrious race of heroes—smitten with feelings in

which it would be vain to deny that a kind of national remorse at her murder exacerbated their deep commiseration for her untimely end.

Let it not be supposed that, in sketching the characters of George IV. and his Queen, this pen has been guided by the feelings of party violence to excuse the errors of the injured party, or exaggerate the offences of the wrongdoer. The portrait which has here been painted of him is undoubtedly one of the darkest shade, and most repulsive form. But the faults which gross injustice alone could pass over without severe reprobation, have been ascribed to their true cause—the corrupting influence of a courtly education, and habits of unbounded self-indulgence upon a nature originally good; and, although the sacred rules of morality forbid us to exonerate from censure even the admitted victim of circumstances so unfriendly to virtue, charity, as well as candour, permit us to add, that those circumstances should bear a far larger share of the reprehension than the individual, who may well claim our pity, while he incurs our censure.

It is impossible to close the sketch of these two exalted personages without a reflection suggested by the effects which were produced upon the public mind by the two most remarkable events connected with their personal history—the death of the Princess Charlotte, and the persecution of the Queen.

To those who witnessed the universal and deep affliction into which the nation was plunged by the former event, no description of the scene is necessary—to those who saw it not, all description would fail in conveying an adequate idea of the truth. It was as if each house had been suddenly bereaved of a favourite child. The whole country felt the blow, as if it had been levelled at every family within its bounds. While the tears of all classes flowed, and the manlier sex itself was softened to pity, the female imagination was occupied, bewildered, distracted, and the labours of child-bearing caused innumerable victims among those whom the incident had struck down to the

ground. Yet the fact of a young woman dying in childbed was anything rather than out of the course of nature; certainly not a town in which it did not happen every month—possibly not a parish of any extent in which it did not occur every year; and in neither town nor parish had the event ever produced the least sensation beyond the walls of the house in which the mournful scene took place.

So the maltreatment, however gross, of a wife by her husband is unhappily by no means an event of rare occurrence. It is not often, certainly, that so cruel and arbitrary a course of conduct has been pursued as that of George IV. towards his consort; but then cases of even greater brutality frequently occur, and pass with but little notice beyond the very small circle of those immediately connected with the parties. But the case of Queen Caroline flung the whole country into a state of excitement only equalled in universality and intenseness by the pangs of grief felt for her daughter's death two years before. Every family made the cause its own. Every man, every woman, took part in the fray. Party animosities, personal differences, were suspended, to join with an injured wife against her tyrant husband. The power of sovereignty itself was shaken to its centre. The military and the civil powers bore their part in the struggle which threatened the monarchy with destruction. The people were so much exasperated that they refused to the injured party herself the right to judge of her own injuries. When she intimated a wish to withdraw from endless persecution, and put a period to incessant annoyance, by retiring from the country, the multitude was roused to frenzy by the bare mention of such a movement, and would have sacrificed to their infuriated sense of the Queen's injuries those advisers who should have honestly counselled her retirement, nay, the Queen herself, who really wished to go away, and restore the peace of the kingdom, while she consulted her own repose. So great was

the diversity in the public consideration of a royal and a private family quarrel!

The treatment experienced by the King himself affords an additional illustration of the extreme favour in which kings are holden by their subjects in these realms. Than George IV. no prince was ever more unpopular while his father lived and reigned; nor could any one have been astonished more than that father would have been could he have seen the different eyes with which his son was regarded, when heir-apparent to his throne, and when filling it as his successor. He would then have learnt how much of his own popularity depended upon his station, how little upon his personal fitness for the office. The Regency began: it was the period of our greatest military glory; all our warlike enterprises were crowned with success; the invincible Napoleon was overthrown, and banished as a criminal to a colony made penal for his special reception. Still the Regent gained no popular favour. At length his father, who had long ceased to reign, and, for any purposes of our rational nature, to exist, ceased to live. The Regent now only changed his name and style; for he had eight years before succeeded to the whole powers of the crown. They who remember the winter of 1820 must be aware that the same individual who, a week before the death of George III. had travelled to and fro on the Brighton and Windsor roads without attracting more notice than any ordinary wayfaring man, was now, merely because his name was changed to King from Regent, greeted by crowds of loyal and curious subjects, anxious to satiate their longing eyes with the sight of a king in name; the reality of the regal officer having been before the same eyes for eight years, and passed absolutely unnoticed.

In a few months came the Queen, and her trial speedily followed. The unpopularity of the Monarch was now renewed in more than its former generality and virulence. Nor was any prince, in any age or country, ever more universally or more deeply hated

than George IV. during the year 1820. The course of the proceeding—his discomfiture in an attempt more tyrannical than any of Henry VIII.'s, and carried on by more base contrivances—his subsequent oppression of his consort in every way—her melancholy end, the victim of his continued persecution—were assuredly ill calculated to lessen the popular indignation, or to turn well-merited scorn into even sufferance, far less respect. Yet such is the native force of reaction in favour of royal personages, that he, who a few months before durst as soon have walked into the flames as into an assembly of his subjects in any part of the empire, was well received in public wherever he chose to go, and was hailed by his Irish subjects rather as a god than a man, he having notoriously abandoned the principles he once professed in favour of that Irish people and their rights.

The accession of the present Queen was supposed by some to be rather a rude trial of the monarchical principle, inasmuch as a young lady of eighteen, suddenly transplanted from the nursery to the throne, might, how great soever her qualifications, be deemed hardly fit at once to hold the sceptre of such a kingdom in such times. But all apprehensions on the subject must have instantly ceased, when it was observed that there broke out all over the country an ungovernable paroxysm of loyal affection towards the illustrious lady, such as no people ever showed even to monarchs endeared by long and glorious reigns to subjects upon whom their wisdom or their valour had showered down innumerable benefits. The expectation bore the place of reality. The Queen was believed to have every good quality that it was desirable she should possess. There was a physical impossibility of her ever having done anything to earn the gratitude of her subjects, because she had only reigned a day; and yet the most extravagant professions of attachment to her person and a zeal for her character burst forth from the whole country, as if she had ruled half a century and had never suffered a day to pass without conferring

some benefit upon her people, nor ever fallen into any of the errors incident to human weakness. It is true that the best friends both of the sovereign and of the monarchy viewed this unreflecting loyalty with distrust, and suspected that a people, thus ready to worship idols made with their own hands, might one day break their handiwork—that they who could be so very grateful for nothing might hereafter show ingratitude for real favours—and that, having, without any grounds beyond the creation of their fancy, professed their veneration for an unknown individual, they might afterwards, with just as little reason, show neglect or dislike. But at any rate the feeling of enthusiastic loyalty and devotion to the sovereign, merely because she was sovereign, could not be doubted, and it could not be exceeded.*

And can it, after all these passages in our recent history, be said that the English people are of a republican tendency—that they care little for the affairs of princes or their smiles—that they are indifferent to, or impatient of, kingly government? Rather let it be asked if there is on the face of the globe any other people to whom the fortunes and the favour of kings and queens are so dear an object of concern? The people of France, under their Grand Monarque, may have made themselves ridiculous by changing the gender of a word permanently, when their prince by mistake called for “*mon carosse* ;” the Romans may have affected a twisted neck to imitate the personal defect of Augustus; these were rather the base flatteries of courtly parasites than the expression of feelings in which the public at large bore any part. The barbarians of Russia flocking to be murdered by their savage Czar, or the slaves of Eastern tyrants kissing the bowstring that is to end their existence, act under the

* It is hardly necessary to observe that no opinions whatever disrespectful or unkind towards the illustrious persons mentioned in these three paragraphs can be intended to be conveyed. What is said of the Queen’s persecutions sufficiently proves this. In regard to the present Sovereign, it may be added that the above passage was written early in February, and before the harsh and unjust treatment which has lately been shown.

immediate influence of strong and habitual religious feeling—the feeling that makes men quail and bow before a present divinity. But no people, no rational set of men, ever displayed to an admiring world the fondness for kings and queens, the desire to find favour in the royal sight, the entire absorption in loyal contemplations, which has generally distinguished the manly, reflecting, free-born English nation.

It is commonly said that the Irish far exceed us in yielding to mere impulses; and certainly the scenes at Dublin in 1821 are well calculated to keep alive this impression. But the excess on that memorable occasion was not great over what had been witnessed in this country, and extraordinary pains were undoubtedly taken to make it believed that George IV. was favourably disposed towards his Irish subjects, nay, that he could be talked, and hurraed, and addressed over, as it were, and deluded by fine honeyed phrases and promises of subscription, into abandoning his new opinions, as he had before given up his old. The balance, therefore, between the two nations being struck, it can hardly be said that the sister kingdom materially excels our own country in the zealous affection for mere royalty.

It is very manifest, therefore, that the notion is wholly groundless which represents the cause of royalty to be more unfavourably regarded in these kingdoms than elsewhere. A broad and a deep foundation exists in all the feelings, tastes, and habits of the people for building up a solid monarchical structure. Principles of policy, opinions upon the relative merits of different systems, are the results of reason and reflection: they may be propagated, may be acquired; they may be strengthened, may be impaired; nay, they may give place to other views taken up after experience and on deliberate consideration; and the formation or the change of such sentiments is never within the power of the rulers or the instructors of the community. But these sentiments, also, are much less to be relied upon for support in any crisis, and they are far less to be dreaded in any altera-

tion which they may undergo, than the strong feelings born with men, and constituting a part of their very nature—feelings which they have not learned at the school of state affairs, or had inculcated by their instructors, or dictated by their leaders, but which form about as much a portion of their mental constitution, and almost influence it as much, as the blood that fills their veins does the structure and the functions of the body. This invaluable security the monarchical principle has in England, and it must, therefore, be the fault of the monarch, and his family, and his servants, if it should ever prove ineffectual to save the crown.

But there is no greater danger besetting that crown than will arise from a disposition to rely too much upon the strong national love of monarchy which has just been feebly portrayed. That its strength and elasticity is great, no man can doubt; that it possesses a singularly restorative virtue, a wonderful power of recovering the kingly authority after the rudest shocks which it can sustain, is certain; but it may be stretched till it cracks, and it may be relaxed by too frequent use. A wise and a prudent foresight, too, will teach the sovereign and his servants that the antagonist principle, ever at work, may both conjure up a storm which cannot be weathered, and may gradually undermine, and, as it were, eat into, that habitual devotion to royalty which, if the monarchy have but fair play, seems powerful enough to carry it through all ordinary trials.

LORD ELDON.

DURING the whole of the Regency and the greater part of his reign, George IV.'s councils were directed by Lord Liverpool, but the power which kept his ministry together was in reality the Chancellor, Lord Eldon; nor did it exist for a day when that powerful aid was withdrawn. For, although this eminent person did not greatly excel in debate, although he personally had no followers that could be termed a party, and although he certainly was of little service in deliberation upon state affairs from the turn of his mind, rather fertile in objections than expedients, he yet possessed a consummate power of managing men, an admirable address in smoothing difficulties with princes, of whom he had large experience, and a degree of political boldness where real peril approached, or obstacles seemingly insurmountable were to be got over, that contrasted strongly with his habits of doubting about nothing, and conjuring up shadowy embarrassments, and involving things of little moment in imaginary puzzles, the creation of an inventive and subtle brain.

This remarkable person had been one of Mr. Pitt's followers from early life, had filled under him the office of Attorney-General during the troublous period of the revolutionary war, and had thus been the principal instrument in those persecutions of his reforming associates which darken the memory of that illustrious minister. But when the Addington ministry was formed, and Lord Loughborough resigned the Great Seal, Lord Eldon, who had for a year presided over the Common Pleas with great ability and acceptance in Westminster Hall, became chancellor, and formed one of the main supports of that useful though feeble administration. After first giving peace to the country because the burthen of the

war could no longer be borne, and then breaking it because they had not the firmness to remain quiet, or the resolution to resist a popular clamour chiefly excited by the newspapers, those ministers, having once more plunged the country into serious embarrassments, were assaulted by a factious league of Pittites, Foxites, Grenvilles, and Windhams, and only defended by two lawyers, Mr. Perceval in the Commons, Lord Eldon in the Lords. But neither of these useful supporters were thoroughly attached to the colours under which they fought; both had a strong leaning towards the leader of the allies, Mr. Pitt, under whom the friends and partisans of Lord St. Vincent, the 'great ornament of the cabinet, were combined to overthrow it upon the ground of attacking that great man's reforming administration; and although nothing could exceed the zeal or spirit of the battle which both, especially Mr. Perceval, made in defence of the citadel, yet, as neither were averse, especially Lord Eldon, to rejoin their ancient Pitt standard, it is more than suspected that the gates of the garrison were opened by the scheming and politic chancellor, who on this occasion displayed his unscrupulous and undaunted political courage, by carrying on the communication on state affairs with the monarch, while his faculties were as yet but half restored after their total alienation.

It is best that we pause upon this remarkable passage of both their lives—remarkable for the light it throws upon Lord Eldon's real character; perhaps yet more remarkable for the reflections to which it unavoidably gives rise upon the monarchical form of government. There is not the least doubt whatever of the extraordinary fact that, after the King had been in a state of complete derangement for some weeks, and after the government had during those weeks been carried on by the ministers without any monarch, important measures were proposed to him, and his pleasure taken upon them after Mr. Pitt resumed his office, when the sovereign was so little fit to perform the functions of his high station, that Dr. Willis was obliged to attend in the closet

the whole time of his Majesty's interview with his Chancellor. Hence we see that the exigencies of this form of government not only imply the monarch exercising his discretion upon subjects wholly above the reach of his understanding on many occasions; not only involve the necessity of the most difficult questions being considered and determined by one wholly incapable by nature, or unfitted by education, to comprehend any portion of them; not only expose the destinies of a great people to the risk of being swayed by a person of the meanest capacity, or by an ignorant and inexperienced child; but occasionally lead to the still more revolting absurdity of a sovereign directing the affairs of the realm—conferring with the keeper of his conscience *circa ardua regni*—while a mad-doctor stands by and has his assistants and the apparatus of his art ready in the adjoining chamber, to keep, by the operation of wholesome fear and needful restraint, the royal patient in order, and prevent the consultations of politic men from being checkered with the paroxysms of insanity.

But should it be said that this was an accident, or that it was an offence for which Lord Eldon and Mr. Pitt alone were amenable, and not the constitution, it is to be further observed that the inevitable necessity entailed by that constitution of the state affairs being conducted in the name and by the authority of a lunatic prince, whose pleasure is, in the eye of the constitutional law, taken at each step, though he is as unconscious of it all the while as the Grand Lama is of Thibet affairs, does not differ materially from the hardly more revolting scene to which we have just adverted as having been enacted in the spring of 1804. These things constitute part, and no small part, of the heavy price which we pay for the benefits of inestimable value secured by the forms of hereditary monarchy, more especially the prevention which it affords of disputed succession and civil broils. But it is ever useful and becoming prudent men to bear in mind both sides of the account, and, while we justly prize the thing we have purchased, not to forget the price we have had to pay.

Lord Eldon, to great legal experience, and the most profound professional learning, united that thorough knowledge of men, which lawyers who practise in the courts, and especially the courts of common law,* attain in a measure and with an accuracy hardly conceivable by those out of the profession, who fancy that it is only from intercourse with courts and camps that a knowledge of the world can be derived. He had a sagacity almost unrivalled; a penetration of mind at once quick and sure; a shrewdness so great as to pierce through each feature of his peculiarly intelligent countenance; a subtlety so nimble, that materially impaired the strength of his other qualities, by lending his ingenuity an edge sometimes too fine for use. Yet this defect, the leading one of his intellectual character, was chiefly confined to his professional exertions; and the counsellor so hesitating in answering an important case—the judge so prone to doubt that he could hardly bring his mind to decide one—was, in all that practically concerned his party or himself, as ready to take a line, and to follow it with determination of purpose, as the least ingenious of ordinary politicians. The timidity, too, of which he has been accused, and sometimes justly, was more frequently the result of the subtlety and refinement which we have mentioned. At all events, no one knew better when to cast it off; and upon great occasions, like the one we have just been contemplating—that is, the occasions which put his interest or his power in jeopardy—a less wavering actor, indeed one more ready at a moment's warning to go all lengths for the attainment of his object, never appeared upon the political stage. His fears in this respect very much resembled his conscientious scruples, of which no man spoke more or felt less; he was about as often the slave of them as the Indian is of his deformed little gods, which he now makes much of, and now breaks in pieces, or casts into the fire. When all in politics seemed smooth, and the parliamentary sea was unruffled as the

* For many years he went the northern circuit, and was a leader upon it, the unwholesome practice not having then been established which separates Equity men from Common Lawyers.

peaceful lake, nothing was to be heard but his lordship's deep sense of his responsible duties ; his willingness to quit the Great Seal ; the imminent risk there was of his not again sitting in that place ; the uncertainty of all the tenures by which official life is held ; and even the arrival of that season when it became him to prepare for a yet more awful change ; and the hearer who knew the speaker, felt here an intimate persuasion, that the most religious of mortals could not have named the great debt of nature with more touching sincerity, or employed an expression better calculated to convey the feeling of dread which such contemplations are fitted to inspire. Such were the songs of the swan when the waters were a mirror, and there was no fear of dissolution. But in foul weather—the instant that peril approached—be the black cloud on the verge of the horizon, and but the size of a man's hand—all these notes were hushed, and a front was assumed as if the Great Seal had been given to him for life, with the power to name his successor by a writing under his hand, or by parole before a single witness. In like manner, when the interests of suitors required despatch, when causes had been heard by the hour and by the day, and all the efforts of the judge to coax the advocate into greater prolixity had been exhausted, the dreaded moment of decision came, but brought only hesitation, doubt, delay. So, too, when common matters occurred in Parliament, and no kind of importance could be attached to the adoption of one course rather than another, bless us ! what inexhaustible suggestions of difficulty, what endless effusion of conflicting views, what a rich mine of mock diamonds, all glittering and worthless, in the shape of reasons on all sides of some question never worth the trouble of asking, and which none but this great magician would stop to resolve ! So again in the council—when there was no danger of any kind, and it signified not a straw what was done, the day, had it been lengthened out by the sun being made to stand still, while our Joshua slew all the men in buckram that he conjured up, would yet have been too short to state and to solve his

difficulties about nothing! But let there come any real embarrassment, any substantial peril which required a bold and vigorous act to ward it off—let there be but occasion for nerves to work through a crisis which it asked no common boldness to face at all—let there arise some new and strange combination of circumstances, which governed by no precedent, must be met by unprecedented measures—and no man that ever sat at a council board, more quickly made up his mind, or more gallantly performed his part. Be the act mild or harsh, moderate or violent, sanctioned by the law and constitution, or an open outrage upon both, he was heard indeed to wail and groan much of piteous necessity—often vowed to God—spoke largely of conscience—complained bitterly of his hard lot—but the paramount sense of duty overcame all other feelings, and, with wailing and with tears, beating his breast, and only not tearing his hair, he did in the twinkling of an eye the act which unexpectedly discomfited his adversaries, and secured his own power for ever. He who would adjourn a private road or estate bill for weeks, unable to make up his mind on one of its clauses, or would take a month to decide on what terms some amendment should be allowed in a suit, could, without one moment's hesitation, resolve to give the King's consent to the making of laws, when he was in such a state of mental disease, that the Keeper of his Person could not be suffered to quit the royal closet for an instant, while his patient was with the Keeper of his Conscience performing the highest function of sovereignty!

With all these apparent discrepancies between Lord Eldon's outward and inward man, nothing could be more incorrect than to represent him as tainted with hypocrisy, in the ordinary sense of the word. He had imbibed from his youth, and in the orthodox bowers which Isis waters, the dogmas of the Tory creed in all their purity and rigour. By these dogmas he abided through his whole life, with a steadfastness, and even to a sacrifice of power, which sets at defiance all attempts to question their perfect sincerity. Such as

he was when he left Oxford, such he continued above sixty years after, to the close of his long and prosperous life;—the enemy of all reform, the champion of the throne and the altar, and confounding every abuse that surrounded the one, or grew up within the precincts of the other, with the institutions themselves; alike the determined enemy of all who would either invade the institution or extirpate the abuse.

One of the most important passages of this remarkable person's life was his participation in the councils of the Princess of Wales, while persecuted by the Whig allies of her royal consort. To her confidence, as to her society, Lord Eldon was recommended, not more by the extraordinary fertility of his resources as a counsellor in difficult emergencies, than by his singular powers of pleasing in the intercourse of private life. For his manners were rendered peculiarly attractive by the charm of constant good humour; and his conversation, if not so classical and refined as that of his brother, Sir William Scott, and somewhat soiled with the rust of professional society and legal habits, was nevertheless lively and entertaining in a very high degree. That she derived great benefit from his support, his countenance, and his skilful advice, no one can doubt. The length to which his zeal is supposed to have carried him, of having a fierce attack on the Prince's conduct towards her printed at a private press, cannot fitly be dwelt upon here, because the whole passage has been confidently denied, and, how universal soever the belief was, confirmed by a copy or two of the work being preserved, so that the whole was afterwards reprinted, and openly sold, the share which Lord Eldon and Mr. Perceval were said to have had in the transaction has never been established by any decisive proofs. This much, however, is quite certain, that they both left their illustrious client at a very short notice, and became as zealous servants of her persecutor as they had once been of herself. The King, whose uneasiness under the necessity in which the death of Mr. Pitt had placed him, of being counselled by a Whig cabinet, was manifest during the whole of

the year 1806, had resolved to change his ministers, and to quarrel with them upon the highly popular ground of their having made themselves the confederates of the Prince, then in the acme of his unpopularity, and, as such, taken part against the Princess. Fortunately for that party, whose utter ruin this would have consummated, another scent crossed his Majesty while in that pursuit, and he dexterously turned aside to follow it. This was the cry of No Popery, and Danger to the Church. Lord Eldon and his coadjutors were raised to power, and Mr. Perceval quitted his profession to share in the government, that he might protect the altar from the Pope, and the throne from the Whigs. For three or four years all went smoothly, and they continued the advocates of the wife, and the adversaries of the husband. A great change, however, was preparing in the relations of their allegiance. When the Prince became Regent he deserted his friends; he took his adversaries into his service; he soon added his favour, became fond of Lord Eldon's pleasant society, became by degrees tolerant of Mr. Perceval himself, and was affected to hysterical paroxysms when death deprived him of the man he had a few years before hated with a bitterness that spurned all bounds of common decency in the expressions which gave it vent.* The Princess was now entirely deserted by her former counsellors, whose party tactics had led them to use her as an instrument for attacking their enemies. Neither Lord Eldon nor Mr. Perceval ever now darkened her doors; Mr.

* In 1806 His Royal Highness exclaimed to Sir Samuel Romilly, with most offensive personal abuse, and a comparison which cannot be recited, that he felt as if he could jump on him and stamp out his life with his feet. Mr. Perceval was at the moment arguing the celebrated case of Miss Seymour at the Bar of the House of Lords; and taking the somewhat invidious line of denying that any guarantee given of payment by the Prince's promise could be available—first, because there was no reason to believe he would keep his promise; and next, because, if he did, he was insolvent. The phrase expressive of His Royal Highness's wish, as given above, is in a very mitigated form, but, even as thus tempered, the reader may possibly deem its violation of all humanity and decorum sufficiently striking.

Canning, Lord Grenville, and Lord Dudley, alone of the party, frequented her society; and this illustrious lady was thus placed in the cruel predicament of losing her former friends, the Tories, by their promotion, while her adversaries, the Whigs, awaiting not very patiently their own call, could hardly be expected to raise any obstructions beyond those already existing in their road to Court, by taking her part only because she was clearly right and had been cruelly wronged.

It remains to note the peculiarities that distinguished this eminent person's professional life, in which his long career was so remarkably brilliant. That he had all the natural qualities and all the acquired accomplishments which go to form the greatest legal character, is undeniable. To extraordinary acuteness and quickness of apprehension, he added a degree of patient industry which no labour could weary; a love of investigation which no harshness in the most uninteresting subject could repulse. His ingenuity was nimble in a singular degree, and it was inexhaustible; subtlety was at all times the most distinguishing feature of his understanding; and after all other men's resources had been spent, he would at once discover matters which, though often too far refined for use, yet seemed so natural to the ground which his predecessors had laboured and left apparently bare, that no one could deem them exotic and far-fetched, or even forced. When, with such powers of apprehending and of inventing, he possessed a memory almost unparalleled, and alike capable of storing up and readily producing both the most general principles and the most minute details, it is needless to add that he became one of the most thoroughly learned lawyers who ever appeared in Westminster Hall, if not the most learned; for, when it is recollected that the science has been more than doubled in bulk, and in variety of subjects has been increased fourfold, since the time of Lord Coke, it is hardly possible to question his superiority to that great light of English jurisprudence, the only man in our legal history with whom this comparison can be

instituted. A singular instance of his universality, and of the masterly readiness with which his extensive learning could be brought to bear upon any point, was once presented in the argument upon a writ of error in the House of Lords. The case had run the gauntlet of the courts, and the most skilful pleaders, as well as the most experienced judges, had all dealt with it in succession; when he, who had not for many years had the possibility of considering any such matters, and had never at any time been a special pleader, at once hit upon a point in pleading which appeared to have escaped the Holroyds, the Richardsons, the Bayleys, the Abbots, the Littledales; and on that point the cause was decided.

From an excess of those endowments in which his extraordinary merits consisted, proceeded also his known and great defects. These were less conspicuous at the bar than upon the bench; though, even as an advocate and an adviser, they impaired his powers. His overdone ingenuity enfeebled the force of his argument; he presented every view that could be taken of his case, and many views that it was bootless to take, and that had better have been left unobserved. His opinion was with difficulty formed; and his answers to cases on which he was consulted often contained all the arguments on both sides, but left out the result. His firmness of purpose, too, and promptitude of decision, were extremely deficient. Seeing too many views of each matter to prefer a particular course and abide by his choice, he could as little make up his mind on the line to be taken in debate as on the opinion to be given in consultation. Hence he was defective in one of the great qualities of an advocate and a debater—a prompt and steady determination as to the course he should pursue, that which is called the *coup d'œil* in the field. His wish to leave nothing unnoticed, being proportioned to the extreme anxiety of his disposition, he frequently overlaid his case at the bar, while the multitude of his points gave his adversaries the opportunity of entangling him in the mazes of his own web, and still oftener enabled them to

defeat him on some immaterial ground where he was weak, though other stronger and impregnable positions were his, had he never ventured out of them to fight at a disadvantage. Where a single and learned judge alone is to deal with a case, this will seldom mislead him, but before a jury its effects must have been extremely prejudicial. Accordingly, his greatest failures were in such proceedings. A case of high treason, which required nine or ten hours to state, was to the ordinary apprehension of all mankind a clear case for acquittal. This in the eyes of many lessened the brilliancy of Mr. Erskine's great victory, by diminishing the chances of a conviction; but the dreadful excitement of the times was enough to have carried the prosecutors through their bad work, even under all the disadvantages of Lord Eldon's very injudicious conduct of the cause. It was, perhaps, a yet greater fault that he suffered himself to be persuaded that a case of high treason existed, when, if he had only examined his proofs with a steady eye, he must have seen at once the merely seditious character of the whole matter, the certainty of a defeat if he prosecuted for treason, and the probability of a conviction had he gone upon the misdemeanor.

His elocution was easy, his language copious without being at all choice, his manner natural and not ungraceful. But to the qualities of eloquence he made small or no pretence. All that he desired to execute he readily enough accomplished; but no man could ever cite a speech of his either at the bar, or on the bench, in the Commons, or in the Lords, which had made any deep impression, or could be termed either a felicitous or in any way a striking performance. Many of his arguments, replete with learning, and marked by extreme ingenuity, many of his judgments, painfully sifting each corner of the complicated case, dealing in a commanding manner with all the arguments, and exhausting all the learning that could be brought to bear upon it, might be cited with ease as memorable examples of labour, of learning, of subtlety.

But not a single occasion ever was presented during his long forensic and parliamentary life in which any one even of his admirers could affect to be struck with his performance as great or masterly, although perhaps not an instance could be named of speaking at all without displaying extraordinary resources and powers. There was always so much wanting to perfection as left no idea of it in the mind of the audience, either while he was working through his task, or after he had brought it to a close.

If the qualities which have been mentioned obstructed him as an advocate, they were still more likely to injure him as a judge. Yet it is certain that great errors were committed in regard to his judicial powers by those who only cursorily observed his apparent vacillation or infirmity of purpose. His opinion was really much more readily and generally formed on the bench than at the bar; and it was much more steadily abided by. He *appeared* to have great difficulty and slowness in coming to a determination. It would be far more correct to say that he had great reluctance to pronounce the decision he had long ago, without any hesitation, come to. The bad habit into which he fell, of not attending to the arguments while they were delivering before him, made him often postpone the forming of his opinion, but it was because he postponed giving his attention to the case. As soon as he brought his mind to bear upon it he with great ease and quickness came to a judgment regarding it; and, having a great and most just confidence in the soundness of that judgment, he scarcely ever after altered it in any material respect. Indeed the hesitation with which he pronounced it, the slowness with which he gave it at all, and, when he gave it, the numberless arguments on both sides which he produced, and the endless difficulties which he raised in the way of the course he was manifestly all the while taking, gave him every appearance of hesitation and uncertainty, and made the person who knew him not fear that he was a vacillating judge, who had hardly formed any opinion at all upon the case, and might be upset by

the casting of dust in the balance to make each side almost indifferently preponderate. They who knew him best were well aware that he had months before thoroughly sifted the whole question, formed a clear and unhesitating opinion upon it, come as quickly as possible to that opinion, and persisted in it with much greater firmness, nay, pertinacity, than the most determined looking of his predecessors, Lord Hardwicke, who decided each case as he heard it, assigning shortly and clearly the grounds of his judgment, or Lord Thurlow, who growled out his determination without a doubt or a reason, and without any delay, as if the decision followed the argument by a physical train of connection, and as if no such thing as a doubt could ever exist in the judicial nature, and no such thing as a reason could be asked at the hands of judicial wisdom and power. It would be no exaggeration at all to assert that Lord Eldon's judgments were more quickly formed, and more obstinately adhered to, than those of any other judge who ever dealt with such various, difficult, and complicated questions as he had to dispose of.

But the apparent hesitation and the certain delay were of the very worst consequence to his usefulness on the bench; and his inattention to the arguments of counsel produced on their part an habitual prolixity from which the bar has not yet recovered. From these causes arose the delays which in his time obstructed the course of justice, and well nigh fixed the current in perennial frost. It would be erroneous to say that all the efforts since made to clear the channels and revive the stream had restored its pristine and natural flow. The suitor and the country will long continue to feel the five-and-twenty years of Lord Eldon's administration.

His knowledge and his ingenuity were not confined to his own peculiar branch of jurisprudence, the law of England. He was an admirable Scotch lawyer also; and he had the courage to decide, as well as the ability to sift, some of the greatest cases that have ever been brought by appeal from the courts of Scotland, reversing

the judgments of those courts on questions of pure Scotch conveyancing, and reversing them so as to offend those lawyers at first who were afterwards ready to confess that he was right, and had preserved the integrity of the Scotch law. But as a judge of appeal he often showed want of nerve; he would carp and cavil at the judgment below—argue over again all the reasonings of the judges—express doubts—raise difficulties—and show constant dissatisfaction—but end with affirming.

The defects which have been noted in his judicial capacity are of course to be traced in the Reports of his judgments. The force of the opinion, and even the course of the argument, are lost in the labyrinth of uncertainty, doubts, and ever conflicting arguments which make up the whole mass. In the sands which spread out far as the eye can reach, which shift perpetually about, which rise in whirls, and are tossed about and heaped up in mountains—the eye loses the view of the point towards which the current of decision is directed, and indeed the current itself is lost in the wide expanse. These learned and elaborate performances are therefore of far less use than they might have been as guides to future lawyers; for the arguments are lost in special circumstances, and the principal points choked among the details. It was said, by Mr. Justice Williams, wittily and correctly, that they would be of special use as soon as the old Ptolemaic cycle should begin a second time to run, and every one thing to happen over again, and in the same order, which had occurred before.

The private character of Lord Eldon was blameless: his temper was admirable; his spirits gay and lively; his manners easy and graceful; far beyond those of any other man who had led his life of labour, and mingled but little in general society. In the domestic relations he was without a fault; affectionately attached to his family, mourning for years the great bereavement of his eldest son, and for years devoting himself to the care of an invalid wife with an assiduity not often exceeded. Indeed, it was to the accidental cir-

cumstance of his marriage, contracted clandestinely, and which prevented him from associating much with her family for some time, that they both owed the recluse habits which produced a distaste for society, and led to a very exaggerated notion of his disposition being parsimonious. What little ground there was for the charge resulted, certainly, from the very narrow circumstances of his early life, the consequence of his imprudently marrying before he had an income sufficient to support a family. In those days he had qualified himself for acting as a conveyancer, in case his failure to obtain practice in London should make it advisable to retire into the country and lead the obscure though respectable life of a provincial barrister. Nor was this event in his history, at one period, improbable or remote. Weary with waiting for clients, he had resolved to quit Westminster Hall, and, turning his back on the “*fumum, et opes, strepitumque Romæ*,” to seek his native city. The accident of a leading counsel’s sudden indisposition introduced him to the notice of the profession, and prevented his name from being now only known as designating a still more learned and able recorder of Newcastle than the late very learned and able Mr. Hopper Williamson.

Reference has already been made to his powers of conversation; the part was named which he took in the select circle of the Princess of Wales, frequented by the most accomplished wits of the day. He was, indeed, a person of remarkable talents in that kind. His perfect good humour would, in his exalted station, have made his society agreeable anywhere but at a court; there he must shine more *proprio Marte* than by the foil of his station in the background. But he was well able to do so. He had no mean powers of wit, and much quickness of delicate repartee. In relating anecdotes he excelled most men, and had an abundant store of them, though, of course, from the habits of his life, they were chiefly professional: his application of them to passing events was singularly happy. The mingled grace and

dignity of his demeanor added no small charm to his whole commerce with society, and, although the two brothers differed exceedingly in this respect, it was usual to observe that, except Sir W. Scott, no man was so agreeable as Lord Eldon.

SIR WILLIAM SCOTT—LORD STOWELL.

FEW names are more intimately connected either with classical or judicial recollections than the one which has been just mentioned.

There has seldom if ever appeared in the profession of the law any one so peculiarly endowed with all the learning and capacity which can accomplish, as well as all the graces which can embellish, the judicial character, as this eminent person. Confining himself to the comparatively narrow and sequestered walks of the Consistorial tribunals he had early been withdrawn from the contentions of the Forum, had lost the readiness with which his great natural acuteness must have furnished him, and had never acquired the habits which forensic strife is found to form—the preternatural power of suddenly producing all the mind's resources at the call of the moment, and shifting their application nimbly from point to point, as that exigency varies in its purpose or its direction. But so had he also escaped the hardness, not to say the coarseness, which is inseparable from such rough and constant use of the faculties, and which, while it sharpens their edge and their point, not seldom contaminates the taste, and withdraws the mind from all pure, and generous, and classical intercourse, to matters of a vulgar and a technical order. His judgment was of the highest caste; calm, firm, enlarged, penetrating, profound. His powers of reasoning were in proportion great, and still more refined than extensive, though singularly free from anything like versatility, and liable to be easily disturbed in their application to every-day use. If the retired and almost solitary habits of the comparatively secluded walk in which he moved, had given him little relish for the strenuous and vehement warfare of rapid argumen-

tation and the logic of unprepared debate, his vast superiority was apparent when, as from an eminence, he was called to survey the whole field of dispute, and to marshal the variegated facts, disentangle the intricate mazes, and array the conflicting reasons which were calculated to distract or suspend men's judgment. If ever the praise of being luminous could be justly bestowed upon human compositions, it was upon his judgments, and it was the approbation constantly, and as it were peculiarly, appropriated to those wonderful exhibitions of judicial capacity.

It would be easy, but it would be endless, to enumerate the causes in which his great powers, both of legal investigation, of accurate reasoning, and of lucid statement, were displayed to the admiration not only of the profession, but of the less learned reader of his judgments. They who deal with such causes as occupied the attention of this great judge have this advantage, that the subjects are of a nature connecting them with general principles, and the matter at stake is most frequently of considerable importance, not seldom of the greatest interest. The masses of property of which the Consistorial Courts have to dispose are often very great; the matrimonial rights on which they have to decide are of an interest not to be measured by money at all; but the questions which arise in administering the Law of Nations comprehend within their scope the highest national rights, involve the existence of peace itself, define the duties of neutrality, set limits to the prerogatives of war. Accordingly, the volume which records Sir W. Scott's judgments is not like the reports of common law cases, a book only unsealed to the members of the legal profession; it may well be in the hands of the general student, and form part of any classical library of English eloquence, or even of national history. If among his whole performances it were required to select one which most excited admiration, all eyes would point to the judgment in the celebrated case of *Dalrymple v. Dalrymple*, where the question for his determination was the state of the Scottish

law upon the fundamental point of what constitutes a marriage. The evidence given upon this question of fact, (as it was before him, a foreign judge,) consisted of the depositions of Scottish lawyers, the most eminent of their age, and who differed widely in their opinions, as well as the text-books referred to in their evidence. Through this labyrinth the learned civilian steered his way with an acuteness, a wariness and circumspection, a penetrating sagacity, and a firmness of decision, only to be matched by the singularly felicitous arrangement of the whole mass of matter, and the exquisite diction, at once beautifully elegant and severely chaste, in which his judgment was clothed. It is well-known that this great performance, though proceeding from a foreign authority, forms at the present day, and will indeed always form, the manual of Scottish lawyers upon its important subject.

It is possibly hypercritical to remark one inaccurate view which pervades a portion of this judgment. Although the Scottish law was of course only matter of evidence before Sir W. Scott, and as such for the most part dealt with by him, he yet allowed himself to examine the writings of commentators, and to deal with them as if he were a Scottish lawyer. Now, strictly speaking, he could not look at those text-writers, nor even at the decisions of judges, except only so far as they had been referred to by the witnesses, the skilful persons, the Scottish lawyers, whose testimony alone he was entitled to consider. For *they* alone could deal with either dicta of text-writers or decisions of courts. *He* had no means of approaching such things, nor could avoid falling into errors when he endeavoured to understand their meaning, and still more when he attempted to weigh them and to compare them together. This at least is the strict view of the matter; and in many cases the fact would bear it out. Thus we constantly see gross errors committed by Scottish and French lawyers of eminence when they think they can apply an English authority. But in the case to which we are referring the learned judge certainly dealt as happily, and as

safely, and as successfully, with the authorities as with the conflicting testimonies which it was his more proper province to sift and to compare. In all respects, then, the renown of this famous judgment is of the highest order, and has left every rival case of the same class far behind it.

Sir William Scott's learning, extensive and profound in all professional matters, was by no means confined within that range. He was amply and accurately endowed with a knowledge of all history of all times; richly provided with the literary and the personal portion of historical lore; largely furnished with stores of the more curious and recondite knowledge which judicious students of antiquity, and judicious students only, are found to amass; and he possessed a rare facility of introducing such matters felicitously for the illustration of an argument or a topic, whether in debate or in more familiar conversation. But he was above the pedantry which disdains the gratification of a more ordinary and everyday curiosity. No one had more knowledge of the common affairs of life; and it was at all times a current observation, that the person who first saw any sight exhibited in London, be it production of nature or of art or of artifice (for he would condescend to see even the juggler play his tricks), was Sir William Scott—who could always steal for such relaxations an hour from settling the gravest questions that could be raised on the rights of nations or the ecclesiastical law of the land. Above all, he was a person of great classical attainments, which he had pursued and, indeed, improved from the earlier years of his life, when he was a college tutor of distinguished reputation; and from hence, as well as from the natural refinement and fastidiousness of his mind, he derived the pure taste which presided over all his efforts, chastening his judicial compositions and adorning his exquisite conversation. Of diction, indeed, he was among the greatest masters, in all but its highest department of energetic declamation and fervent imagery. "*Quid multa? Istum audiens equidem*

sic judicare soleo, quidquid aut addideris, aut mutaveris aut detraxeris, vitiosius et deterius futurum.”*

To give samples of his happy command of language would be an easy thing, but it would almost be to cite the bulk of his Judgments. “Having thus furnished the rule which must govern our decision,” said he, in the famous case already referred to, of *Dalrymple v. Dalrymple*, “the English law retires, and makes way for the Scottish, whose principles must finally dispose of the question.” Quoting the words of Puffendorff (and, it may be observed in passing, misquoting them for the purpose of his argument, and omitting the part which answered it), who after stating an opinion subtilely and sophistically held by some, adds, “*Tu noli sic sapere*,” Sir William Scott at once gave it thus, in the happiest, the most literal, and yet the most idiomatic English—“Be not you wise in such conceits as these.”

To illustrate by examples his singularly refined and pungent wit in conversation, or the happy and unexpected quotations with which he embellished it, or the tersely told anecdotes with which he enlivened it, without for an instant fatiguing his audience, would be far less easy—because it is of the nature of the refined essence in which the spirit of the best society consists, not to keep. When some sudden and somewhat violent changes of opinion were imputed to a learned judge, who was always jocosely termed Mrs. —, “*Varium et mutabile semper Femina*,” was Sir William Scott’s remark. A celebrated physician having said, somewhat more flippantly than becomed the gravity of his cloth, “Oh, you know, Sir William, after forty a man is always either a fool or a physician!” “Mayn’t he be both, Doctor?” was the arch rejoinder—with a most arch leer and an insinuating voice half drawled out. “A vicar was once” (said his lordship, presiding at a dinner of the Admiralty Sessions) “so wearied out with his parish clerk confining himself to the 100th Psalm, that he remonstrated, and insisted upon

* Cic. de Orat. lib. iii.

a variety, which the man promised ; but, old habit proving too strong for him, the old words were as usual given out next Sunday, ‘All people that on earth do dwell.’ Upon this the vicar’s temper could hold out no longer, and, jutting his head over the desk, he cried ; ‘Damn all people that on earth do dwell!’—a very compendious form of anathema!” added the learned chief of the Spiritual Court.

This eminent personage was in his opinions extremely narrow and confined ; never seeming to have advanced beyond “the times before the flood” of light which the American War and the French Revolution had let in upon the world—times when he was a tutor in Oxford, and hoped to live and die in the unbroken quiet of her bowers, enjoying their shade variegated with no glare of importunate illumination. Of every change he was the enemy ; of all improvement, careless and even distrustful ; of the least deviation from the most beaten track, suspicious ; of the remotest risks, an acute prognosticator as by some natural instinct ; of the slightest actual danger, a terror-stricken spectator. As he could imagine nothing better than the existing state of any given thing, he could see only peril and hazard in the search for any thing new ; and with him it was quite enough, to characterize a measure as “a mere novelty,” to deter him at once from entertaining it—a phrase of which Mr. Speaker Abbot, with some humour, once took advantage to say, when asked by his friend what that mass of papers might be, pointing to the huge bundle of the Acts of a single session,—“Mere novelties, Sir William—mere novelties.” And, in truth, all the while that this class of politicians are declaiming and are alarming mankind against every attempt to improve our laws, made judiciously and safely, because upon principle, and systematically, and with circumspection, they are unhesitatingly passing in the gross, and without any reflection at all, the most startling acts for widely affecting the laws, the institutions, and the interests of the country. It is deeply to be lamented that one endowed with such rare qualifications for working in

the amendment of the Consistorial Law should have grown old in the fetters of a school like this. His peculiar habits of reasoning—his vast and various knowledge—his uniting with the habits of a judge, and the authority due to so distinguished a member of the Clerical Courts, all the erudition and polish of a finished scholar, and all the knowledge of the world and habits of society which are least to be expected in such dignitaries—finally, his equal knowledge of both the English and Scottish systems—seemed to point him out as the very person at whose hands this great branch of the jurisprudence of both nations might naturally have expected to receive its most important amendments.

DR. LAURENCE.

CONTEMPORARY with Sir William Scott, the leading practitioner in his courts, united to him in habits of private friendship, though indeed differing from him in many of his opinions and almost all his habits of thinking, was Dr. Laurence, one of the most able, most learned, and most upright men that ever adorned their common profession, or bore a part in the political controversies of their country. He was, indeed, one of the most singularly endowed men, in some respects, that ever appeared in public life. He united in himself the indefatigable labour of a Dutch commentator, with the alternate playfulness and sharpness of a Parisian wit. His general information was boundless; his powers of mastering any given subject were not to be resisted by any degree of dryness or complication in its details; and his fancy was lively enough to shed light upon the darkest, and to strew flowers round the most barren tracks of inquiry, had it been suffered to play easily and vent itself freely. But unfortunately, he had only the conception of the wit, with the execution of the commentator; it was not Scarron or Voltaire speaking in society, or Mirabeau in public, from the stores of Erasmus or of Bayle; but it was Hemsterhuysius emerging into polished life, with the dust of many libraries upon him, to make the circle gay; it was Grævius entering the senate with somewhere from one-half to two-thirds of his next folio at his fingers' ends, to awaken the flagging attention, and strike animation into the lazy debate. He might have spoken with the wit of Voltaire and the humour of Scarron united; none of it could pierce through the lumber of this solid matter; and any spark that by chance found its way, was stifled by the still more uncouth manner. As an author, he had no such defects; his profuse stores of

knowledge—his business-like habit of applying them to the point—his taste, generally speaking correct, because originally formed on the models of antiquity, and only relaxed by his admiration of Mr. Burke's less severe beauties; all gave him a facility of writing, both copiously and nervously, upon serious subjects; while his wit could display itself upon lighter ones unincumbered by pedantry, and unobstructed by the very worst delivery ever witnessed—a delivery calculated to alienate the mind of the hearer, to beguile him of his attention, but by stealing it away from the speaker, and almost to prevent him from comprehending what was so uncouthly spoken. It was in reference to this unvarying effect of Dr. Laurence's delivery, that Mr. Fox once said, a man should attend, if possible, to a speech of his, and then speak it over again himself: it must, he conceived, succeed infallibly, for it was sure to be admirable in itself, and as certain of being new to the audience. But in this saying there was considerably more wit than truth. The Doctor's speech was sure to contain materials not for one, but for half a dozen speeches; and a person might with great advantage listen to it, in order to use those materials, in part, afterwards, as indeed many did both in Parliament and at the bar where he practised, make an effort to attend to him, how difficult soever, in order to hear all that could be said upon every part of the question.* But whoever did so, was sure to hear a vast deal that was useless, and could serve no purpose but to perplex and fatigue; and he was equally sure to hear the immaterial points treated with as much vehemence, and as minutely dwelt upon, as the great and commanding branches of the subject. In short, the commentator was here again displayed, who never can perceive the different value of different matters; who gives no relief to his work, and exhausts all the stores of his learning, and spends the whole power of his ingenuity, as eagerly in dethroning one particle which

* The experiment mentioned by Mr. Fox has repeatedly been tried at the bar by the writer of these pages to a certain extent and with success.

has usurped another's place, as in overthrowing the interpolated verse in St. John, or the spurious chapter in Josephus, upon which may repose the foundations of a religion, or the articles of its creed.

It is hardly necessary to add, they who saw Dr. Laurence only in debate, saw him to the greatest disadvantage, and had no means of forming anything like a fair estimate of his merits. In the higher intercourse of society, too, unless in conversation wholly unrestrained by the desire of distinction, he appeared to little advantage; his mirth, though perfectly inoffensive and good-natured, was elaborate; his wit or drollery wanted concentration and polish; it was unwieldy and clumsy; it was the gamboling of the elephant, in which, if strength was seen, weight was felt still more; nor was it Milton's elephant, recreating our first parents, and who, "to make them play, would wreath his little proboscis;"—but the elephant capered bodily, and in a lumbering fashion, after the manner of his tribe. Yet set the same man down to write, and whose compositions are marked by more perfect propriety, more conciseness, more point, more rapidity? His wit sparkles and illuminates, without more effort than is requisite for throwing it off. It is varied too, and in each kind is excellent. It is a learned wit, very frequently, and then wears an elaborate air; but not stiff or pedantic, not forced or strained, unless we deem Swift's wit, when it assumes this garb, unnatural or heavy—a sentence which would condemn some of his most famous pieces, and sweep away almost all Arbuthnot's together.

In his profession, Dr. Laurence filled the highest place. Practising in courts where a single judge decides, and where the whole matter of each cause is thoroughly sifted and prepared for discussion out of court, he experienced no ill effect from the tedious style and unattractive manner which a jury could not have borne, and felt not the want of that presence of mind, and readiness of execution, which enabled a *Nisi Prius* advocate to decide and to act at the moment,

according to circumstances suddenly arising and impossible to foresee. He had all the qualities which his branch of the forensic art requires; profound learning, various and accurate information upon ordinary affairs, as well as the contents of books, and a love of labour not to be satiated by any prolixity and minuteness of detail into which the most complicated cause could run—a memory which let nothing escape that it had once grasped, whether large in size or imperceptibly small—an abundant subtlety in the invention of topics to meet an adversary's arguments, and a penetration that never left one point of his own case unexplored. These qualities might very possibly have been modified and blended with the greater terseness and dexterity of the common lawyer, had his lot been cast in Westminster Hall; but in the precincts of St. Paul's, they were more than sufficient to place him at the head of his brethren, and to obtain for him the largest share of practice which any civilian of the time could enjoy without office.

The same fulness of information and facility of invention, which were so invaluable to his clients, proved most important resources to his political associates, during the twenty years and more that he sat in Parliament; and they were almost equally useful to the great party he was connected with, for many years before that period. It was a common remark, that nothing could equal the richness of his stores, except the liberality with which he made them accessible to all. Little as he for some time before his death had taken part in debates, and scantily as he had been attended to when he did, his loss might be plainly perceived, for a long time, in the want generally felt of that kind of information which had flowed so copiously through all the channels of private intercourse, and been obtained so easily, that its importance was not felt until its sources were closed for ever. It was then that men inquired "Where Laurence was?" as often as a difficulty arose which called for more than common ingenuity to meet it; or a subject presented itself so large and shapeless, and dry and

thorny, that few men's fortitude could face, and no one's patience could grapple with it; or an emergency occurred, demanding, on the sudden, access to stores of learning, the collection of many long years, but arranged so as to be made available to the most ignorant at the shortest notice. Men lamented the great loss they had experienced, and their regrets were mingled with wonder when they reflected that the same blow had deprived them of qualities the most rarely found in company with such acquirements; for, unwilling as the jealousy of human vanity is to admit various excellence in a single individual, (*mos hominum ut nolint eundem pluribus rebus excellere*,) it was in vain to deny that the same person, who exceeded all others in powers of hard working upon the dullest subjects, and who had, by his life of labour, become as a dictionary to his friends, had also produced a larger share than any one contributor, to the epigrams, the burlesques, the grave ironies and the broad jokes, whether in verse or in prose, of the *Rolliad*.

The highest of the praises which Dr. Laurence had a right to challenge, remains. He was a man of scrupulous integrity and unsullied honour; faithful in all trusts; disinterested to a weakness. Constant, but rather let it be said, ardent and enthusiastic in his friendships; abandoning his whole faculties with a self-derelection that knew no bounds, either to the cause of his friend, or his party, or the common weal—he commanded the unceasing respect of all with whom he came in contact, or even in conflict; for when most offended with his zeal, they were forced to admit, that what bore the semblance of intolerance was the fruit of an honest anxiety for a friend or a principle, and never was pointed towards himself. To the praise of correct judgment he was not so well entitled. His naturally warm temperament, and his habit of entering into whatever he took up with his whole faculties, as well as all his feelings, kindled in him the two great passions which checkered the latter part of Mr. Burke's life. He spent some years upon Mr. Hastings's Impeachment (having acted as counsel to the managers), and

some upon the French Revolution, so absorbed in those subjects that their impression could not be worn out; and he ever after appeared to see one or other of them, and not unfrequently both together, on whatever ground he might cast his eyes. This almost morbid affection he shared with his protector and friend, of whom we have already spoken at great but not unnecessary length.

SIR PHILIP FRANCIS.

No man after Dr. Laurence was more intimately mixed up with the great leader of the Impeachment which has just been mentioned, than Mr., afterwards Sir Philip Francis. He had early in life been taken from the War-office, where he was a clerk, and sent out to India as one of the Supreme Council, when the government of those vast settlements was new modelled, a promotion not easily understood whether the dignity of the station, or its important functions at that critical period, be regarded. In the exercise of its duties he had displayed much of the ability which he undoubtedly possessed, more, perhaps, of the impetuous temper which as unquestionably belonged to him, all the hatred of other men's oppressions, and the aversion to corrupt practices, which distinguished him through life; and he had, in consequence of these qualities, become the regular opponent, and the personal enemy, of Warren Hastings, then Governor-general, with whom his altercation ended, on the occasion, in a hostile rencounter and in a severe wound that threatened his life. Upon his return to Europe with a much smaller fortune than the lax morality of Englishmen's habits in those days allowed the bulk of them to amass, his joining in the Impeachment was quite a matter of course. His local knowledge and his habits of business were of invaluable service to the managers; he exerted his whole energies in a cause so near his heart from every principle and from all personal feelings; nor could he ever be taught to understand why the circumstance of his being the private enemy of the man, as well as the public adversary of the governor, should be deemed an obstacle to his taking this part. The motives of delicacy, which so many thought that he ought to have felt on

this subject, were wholly beyond his conception ; for he argued that the more he disliked Mr. Hastings, the wider his grounds of quarrel with him were, the more natural was it that he should be his assailant ; and the reason for the House of Commons excluding him by their vote from a place among the managers, surpassed his powers of comprehension. Had the question been of making him a judge in the cause, or of appointing him to assist in the defence, he could well have understood how he should be deemed disqualified ; but that a prosecutor should be thought the less fit for the office when he was the more likely strenuously to discharge its duties of bringing the accused to justice and exacting punishment for his offences, because he hated him on private as well as public grounds, was a thing to him inconceivable. It never once occurred to him that an Impeachment by the Commons is like the proceeding of an Inquest ; that the managers represent the grand jury acting for the nation, and actuated only by the love of strict justice ; and that to choose for their organ one who was also known to be actuated by individual passions, would have been as indecorous as for the prosecutor in a common indictment to sit upon the grand jury, and accompany the foreman in presenting his bill to the court.

The trait which has just been given paints the character of Sir Philip Francis's mind as well as any that could be selected. It was full of fire, possessed great quickness, was even, within somewhat narrow limits, endued with considerable force, but was wholly wanting in delicacy, as well as unequal to taking enlarged views, and unfit for sober reflection. But his energy begot a great power of application, and he was accordingly indefatigable in labour for a given object of no very wide range, and to be reached within a moderate time ; for anything placed at a distance his impatient nature disqualified him from being a competitor. His education had been carefully conducted by his father, the translator of Demosthenes and Horace, two works of very unequal merit as regards the English language, though abundantly showing a familiarity with both

the Latin and the Greek. The acquaintance with classical compositions which the son thus obtained was extensive, and he added to it a still greater familiarity with the English classics. His taste was thus formed on the best models of all ages, and it was pure to rigorous severity. His own style of writing was admirable, excelling in clearness, abounding in happy idiomatic terms, not overloaded with either words or figures, but not rejecting either beautiful phrases or appropriate ornament. It was somewhat sententious and even abrupt, like his manner; it did not flow very smoothly, much less fall impetuously; but in force and effect it was by no means wanting, and though somewhat more antithetical, and thus wearing an appearance of more labour, than strict taste might justify, it had the essential quality of being so pellucid as to leave no cloud whatever over the meaning, and seemed so impregnated with the writer's mind as to wear the appearance of being perfectly natural, notwithstanding the artificial texture of the composition. In diction it was exceedingly pure; nor could the writer suffer, though in conversation, any of the modish phrases or even pronunciations which the ignorance or the carelessness of society is perpetually contributing, with the usages of Parliament, to vitiate our Saxon dialect. The great offender of all in this kind, the newspaper press, and perhaps most of any those half literary contributors to it who, enamoured of their own sentimental effusions and patchwork style, assume the license of using words in senses never before thought of, were to him the object of unmeasured reprobation; and he would fling from him such effusions, with an exclamation that he verily believed he should outlive his mother tongue as well as all memory of plain old English sense, unless those writers succeeded in killing him before his time. His critical severity, even as to the language and tone of conversation, was carried to what sometimes appeared an excess. Thus he was wont to say that he had nearly survived the good manly words of assent and denial, the *yes* and *no* of our ancestors, and could now hear nothing but "unquestionably," "certain-

ly," "undeniably," or "by no means," and "I rather think not;" forms of speech to which he gave the most odious and contemptuous names, as effeminate and emasculated, and would turn into ridicule by caricaturing the pronunciation of the words. Thus he would drawl out "unquestionably" in a faint, childish tone, and then say, "Gracious God! does he mean *yes*? Then why not say so at once like a man?" As for the slip-slop of some fluent talkers in society, who exclaim that they are "*so* delighted," or "*so* shocked," and speak of things being pleasing or hateful "to a degree," he would bear down upon them without mercy, and roar out, "To what degree? Your word means anything, and everything, and nothing."

There needs no addition to this for the purpose of remarking how easily he was tired by prozers, (those whom it is the mode to call *boreds*,) come they even under coronets and crowns. Once when the Prince of Wales was graciously pleased to pursue at great length a narrative of little importance, Sir P. Francis, wearied out, threw back his head on his chair with a "Well, sir, well?" The sentiveness of royalty at once was roused, and the historian proceeded to inflict punishment upon the uncourtly offender by repeating and lengthening his recital, after a connecting sentence, "If Sir Philip will permit me to proceed."—A less exalted performer in the same kind having on another occasion got him into a corner, and innocently mistaking his agitations and gestures for extreme interest in the narrative which he was administering to his patient, was somewhat confounded when the latter, seizing him by the collar, exclaimed with an oath that "Human nature could endure no more."—In all this there was a consistency and an uniformity that was extremely racy and amusing. He is not now present to cry out "What does that mean, sir? What would you be at? No gibberish!" and therefore it may be observed that there was something exceedingly *piquant* in this character.*

* "Le jouissant caractère de ce docteur"—says Le Sage.

He was in very deed "a character" as it is called. By this is meant, a mind cast in a peculiar mould, and unwilling either to be remodelled and recast, or to be ground down in the mill of fashion, and have its angles and its roughness taken off so as to become one of the round and smooth and similar personages of the day, and indeed of all times and almost all nations. Such characters are further remarkable for ever bearing their peculiarities about with them, so as at all seasons and on all subjects to display their deviations from unlikeness to other men. Such persons are of necessity extremely amusing; they are rare, and they are odd; they are also ever in keeping and consistency with themselves as they are different from others. Hence they acquire, beside entertaining us, a kind of claim to respect, because they are independent and self-possessed. But they are almost always more respected than they at all deserve. Not only are many of their peculiarities the results of indulgence approaching to affectation, so as to make them little more than a respectable kind of buffoons, enjoying the mirth excited at their own expense, but even that substratum of real originality which they have without any affectation, commands far more respect than it is entitled to, because it wears the semblance of much more independence than belongs to it, and while it savours of originality is really only peculiar and strange. Sir Philip Francis had many much higher qualities; but his singularities were probably what chiefly recommended him in society.

The first Lord Holland had been Dr. Francis's patron, and to him his *Demosthenes* was dedicated. Through him, too, the son obtained his first promotion, a place in the Foreign Office, which afterwards led to one in the War Department. Nor did he ever through life forget this early patronage—neither the present nor the former Lord, neither his own friend nor his father's friend did he ever forget. On his return from India, which he quitted with a character of unsullied purity far more rare in those days than in our own, he thus became naturally connected with the Whig party, flourishing

under the illustrious son of his own and his father's patron. On all Indian questions he was of the greatest use, and of the highest authority. But his exertions were not confined to these. His general opinions were liberal and enlightened; he was the enemy of all corruption, all abuse, all oppression. His aid was never wanting to redress grievances, or to oppose arbitrary proceedings. When examined as a witness on the High Treason Trials in 1794, Mr. Horne Tooke, being for no conceivable reason dissatisfied with his evidence, used in private and behind his back to represent him as having flinched from bearing testimony to the character of his brother Reformers. The drama of examination which he was wont to rehearse was a pure fiction, and indeed not only never was performed, but, by the rules of procedure, could not have been represented; for it made the party producing Sir P. Francis as a witness subject him to a rigorous cross-examination.

To go out as Governor-general of India was always the great ambition of his life; and when, on Mr. Pitt's death, the Whig party came into office, he believed the prize to be within his grasp. But the new ministers could no more have obtained the East India Company's consent, than they could have transported the Himalaya mountains to Leadenhall-street. This he never could be made to perceive: he ever after this bitter disappointment regarded Mr. Fox as having abandoned him; and always gave vent to his vexation in terms of the most indecent and almost insane invective against that amiable and admirable man. Nay more—as if the same grievance which alienated his reason, and also undermined his integrity, that political virtue which had stood so many rude assaults both in Asia and in Europe, had been found proof against so many seductions of lucre, so many blandishments of rank, and had stood unshaken against all the power both of Oriental satraps and of English dictators, is known to have yielded for a moment to the vain hope of obtaining his favourite object, through the influence of the man whom next to Mr. Pitt, he had

most indefatigably and most personally opposed. A proposition made to Lord Wellesley by him, through a common friend, with the view of obtaining his influence with Lord Glenville, supposed erroneously to be the cause of his rejection as Governor-general, was at once and peremptorily rejected by that noble person, at a moment when Sir P. Francis was in the adjoining room, ready to conclude the projected treaty. If this casts some shade over the otherwise honest and consistent course of his political life, it must be remembered that for the very reason of its being a single and a passing shade, the effect on his general estimation is exceedingly slight.

In parliamentary debates Sir P. Francis did not often take a part. The few speeches which he did make, were confined to great occasions, unless where Indian subjects came under discussion, and they were distinguished by the same purity of style and epigrammatic tone which mark his writings. It was chiefly as concerned in the party manifestoes and other publications of the Whigs, that he formed a considerable member of their body. In council, except for boldness and spirit, in which he was ever exuberant, there could be but little benefit derived from one so much the slave of personal antipathy and prejudice, so often the sport of caprice, so little gifted with calm, deliberative judgment. But he saw clearly; he felt strongly; he was above mean, paltry, narrow views; and he heartily scorned a low, tricking, timid policy. The Opposition never were so free from tendencies in that bad direction as not to benefit by the manly and worthy correction which he was always ready to administer; and if they had oftener listened to his counsels, or dreaded his resentment, the habit of making war upon the crown without conciliating the people, of leading on the country to the attack with one eye turned wistfully towards the court, would never have become so confirmed, or worked such mischief as it did under the leadership of the aristocratic Whigs.

One peculiarity of Sir P. Francis's character has not been mentioned, and yet were it left out, the sketch would both imperfectly represent his failings, and omit

a great enhancement of his merits. His nature was exceedingly penurious, and, like all men of this cast, he stooped to the smallest savings. His little schemes of economy were the subject of amusing observation to his friends; nor did they take much pains to keep from his knowledge an entertainment in which he could not very heartily partake. But if he stooped to petty savings, he never stooped one hair's breadth to undue gains; and he was as sparing of the people's money as of his own. If avarice means a desire of amassing at the expense either of other men's stores or of a man's own honour, to avarice he was a stranger; and it justly raised him in all reflecting men's esteem, to consider that he who would take a world of pains to save half a sheet of paper, had been an Indian satrap in the most corrupt times, and retired from the barbaric land washed by Ormus and Ind, the land of pearls and gold, with hands so clean and a fortune so moderate, that, in the fiercest storms of faction, no man ever for an instant dreamt of questioning the absolute purity of his administration.

It remains to mention the belief which has of late years sprung up, that Sir Philip Francis lay concealed under the shade of a great name, once the terror of kings and their ministers—the celebrated Junius. Nor can these remarks be closed without adverting shortly and summarily to the circumstantial evidence upon which this suspicion rests.

There is a singularly perfect coincidence between the dates of the letters and Sir P. Francis's changes of residence. The last letter, in 1772, is dated May 12, and was received some days before by Woodfall. Another letter mentions his having been out of town some time before; there had been an interval in the correspondence of some weeks; his father was then ill at Bath; and, on the 23d of March, he was dismissed from the War Office. That he went to Bath then, before going abroad, is very likely; that he remained on the Continent till the end of the year is certain; and no letter of Junius appeared till January, 1773. His appointment to Bengal was soon after in agitation, for it

must have been arranged before June, when it was finally made.

Again—he was in the War Office from 1763 to 1772, and Junius evinces on all occasions a peculiar acquaintance with, and interest in, the concerns of that department. Three clerks of much importance there, of no kind of note beyond the precincts of the Horse Guards, are spoken of with great interest and much bitterness occasionally. One of them is the object of unceasing personal attack, one whose very name had now perished but for this controversy—a Mr. Chamier; and he is abused under all the appellatives of contempt by which familiars in the department might be supposed to have known him. Moreover, no less than four letters on this person's promotion are addressed to Lord Barrington, the Secretary at War, and these all under other signatures; obviously because such a fire on such a subject would have directed the attention of its objects to the War Office, in connection with so important a name as Junius, whom we find expressing great anxiety to Woodfall that the circumstance of these War Office letters being written by the author of Junius's Letters should be kept carefully concealed. Nevertheless, this may have transpired, and enabled Lord Barrington to trace the authorship into the office. The fact is certain, that, after January, 1773, Junius wrote no more, and that Mr. Francis, the clerk lately dismissed, was sent out a member of council to Calcutta.

But the War Office is not the only department in which Junius showed a peculiar interest. The foreign office also appears to have shared his regard, and been familiar to him, from various passages both in his public and private correspondence with Woodfall. Now, before he was placed at the Horse Guards, Sir Philip Francis had been nearly four years a clerk in that department.

It is remarkable that Junius generally shows a great regard, and at all times much forbearance towards the family of Lord Holland, even when most devoted to Lord Chatham, their powerful adversary. This tallies

with the relation in which Sir P. Francis stood to Lord Holland. His father had been his domestic chaplain, and the son owed to him his first appointment. Junius seems also by numberless proofs to have had a singular personal kindness for, and confidence in, Woodfall, and none at all for the other publishers, through whom, under various signatures, he addressed the country. Now, Sir P. Francis was a schoolfellow of Woodfall, and they were on friendly terms through life, though they seldom met. Junius seems to have been apprehensive that Woodfall suspected who he was; for, in one of his private notes, he entreats him "to say, candidly, whether he knew or suspected who he was."

It is known that Junius attended in the gallery of the House of Commons, and he has occasionally quoted the debates from his own notes or recollections. Sir P. Francis did the same, and he communicated his notes to Almon, for his life of Lord Chatham; there is a remarkable coincidence with Junius in some passages given by both, necessarily unknown to each other, and unaccountable unless they were one and the same person.

All these and other matters of external evidence of a similar description, make out a case of circumstantial proof, sufficiently striking, and strong enough to render the identity highly probable. Is the internal evidence equally strong? It is the singularity of this question, that, whereas in almost all other cases, the proof rests chiefly, if not wholly, on comparison of styles, and there is little or no external evidence either way, here, in proportion as the latter is abundant, the former is scanty. No doubt peculiar turns of expression are everywhere to be found the same in both; and even where the phrase is of a somewhat extraordinary kind; as "*of his side*," "*so far forth*," "*I mean the public cause*" (for I would promote). There is also much of Sir P. Francis's very peculiar manner and hasty abrupt temper in the private communications with Woodfall, with many phrases common to those communications and Sir Philip's known writings and

conversation. But here, perhaps, the similarity may be said to end. For there cannot be produced any considerable piece of composition known to have proceeded from Sir P. Francis's pen, which is of the same kind with the Letters of Junius; although passages of great excellence, full of point, instinct with severity, marked by an implacable spirit, and glowing with fierce animation, have been selected for the just admiration of critics; such as his invective against Lord Thurlow, his attack upon the legal profession in the debate on the continuation of impeachment after a dissolution, and his defence of himself against Lord Kenyon's remarks. That these and others of his writings (for though these were spoken, they bear all the marks of preparation, and were couched in a written style) were of far lesser merit than the letters in point of composition no person of correct taste can doubt. But they were not written in the peculiar style of Junius, and could not be mistaken for the productions of the same much overrated pen.

It remains, while the question thus hangs in suspense, to mention the evidence of handwriting. The comparison of Sir P. Francis's ordinary hand, which was a remarkably fine one, with the studiously feigned hand of Junius's Letters, and of all his private correspondence, seemed to present many points of resemblance. But a remarkable writing of Sir. P. Francis was recovered by the late Mr. D. Giles, to whose sister he had many years before sent a copy of verses with a letter written in a feigned hand. Upon comparing this fiction with the fac similes published by Woodfall of Junius's hand, the two were found to tally accurately enough. The authorship is certainly not proved by this resemblance, even if it were admitted to prove that Sir P. Francis had been employed to copy the letters. But the importance of the fact as a circumstance in the chain of evidence is undeniable.

To this may be added the interest which he always took in the work. Upon his decease, the vellum-bound

and gilt copies, which formed the only remuneration he would receive from the publisher, were sought for in vain among his books. But it is said that the present which he made his second wife on their marriage was a finely bound copy of Junius.

The cause of his carefully concealing his authorship, if indeed he was the author, will naturally be asked. No one can tell very certainly, but many reasons may be supposed; and it is quite certain that he himself ever regarded the supposition as a great impeachment of his character. Had he been on habits of intimacy with the objects of Junius's attacks at the time of these attacks? Had he ever been under personal obligations to them? A promise of secrecy, given when he was appointed to India, would only account for his concealing the fact, not for his indignation in denying it. That he was silenced by that appointment is another reason why he might not be ready to confess the truth. Add to all this, that they who knew him were aware how greatly superior he deemed many of his own writings to the much better known and more admired letters of his supposed representative.

There were those who, refining upon things, drew an argument in favour of his authorship from the manner of his denial. These reasoners contended that he never plainly and distinctly denied it. But this only arose from his feeling it to be an imputation, and therefore that he was bound to do a great deal more than disclaim—that it behoved him at least to repel with warmth. That his answer to all such questions implied and contained an unequivocal denial cannot be doubted. To one he said, "I have pleaded not guilty, and if any one after that chooses to call me a scoundrel, he is welcome." To another, who said "I'd fain put a question to you," he exclaimed, "You had better not; you may get an answer you won't like." To a third, "Oh, they know I'm an old man, and can't fight."

It is equally true that these answers are not inconsistent with the supposition of his having had a knowledge of the secret, and even been engaged in the copy-

ing of the letters, without being their author ; and it must be added that the same supposition tallies also with the greater part, if not the whole, of the circumstances above detailed. In this belief it is upon the whole, perhaps, both most reasonable and most charitable to rest. If he felt the imputation of the authorship to be so grievous a charge against him, he has full right to plead the integrity and honour of his whole life in vindication from the main accusation, while his only being privy to the secret would imply no criminality at all, and his having had a merely mechanical share in the publication might be accounted for by private authority or by official or personal relationship.

From the purport of the preceding pages will be gathered an opinion upon the whole considerably lower of this distinguished individual than may be found embodied in the panegyrical portraiture of Mr. Burke's speech on the India Bill. It would not be correct to speak even as regards Indian affairs of "his deep reach of thought, his large legislative conceptions, his grand plans of policy," because the mind of Sir Philip Francis was not framed upon a model like this, which might serve for the greatest genius that ever shone upon state affairs. It is also an exaggeration for Mr. Burke and his colleagues to affirm that "from him all their lessons had been learnt, if they had learnt any good ones." But the highest part of the eulogy rises into no exaggeration.— "This man, driven from his employment, discountenanced by the directors, had no other reward and no other distinction but that inward 'sunshine of the soul,' which a good conscience can always bestow on itself."



MR. HORNE TOOKE.

MENTION has been made of the enmity which Mr. Horne Tooke always bore towards Sir Philip Francis; and it is not to be forgotten, among the circumstances which tend to connect the latter with Junius, that a fierce controversy had raged between the author of the Letters and the great grammarian; a controversy in which, although no one now doubts that the former was worsted, yet certainly the balance of abuse had been on his side, and the opinion of the public at the time was generally in his favour. Another circumstance of the same description is the zeal with which Sir Philip Francis always espoused the quarrel of Wilkes, as vehemently as he made war on Lord Mansfield. Few who recollect the debates of 1817, can forget the violence with which he attacked a member of the House of Commons for having said something slighting of Wilkes, while the eulogy of Lord Mansfield that accompanied the censure did not certainly recommend it to Sir Philip's palate. "Never while you live, sir, say a word in favour of that corrupt judge."—"It was only the eloquence of his judgment on Wilkes's case that was praised."—"But the rule is never to praise a bad man for anything. Remember Jack Lee's golden rule, and be always abstemious of praise to an enemy. Lord Mansfield was sold on the Douglas cause, and the parties are known through whom the money was paid. As for Wilkes, whatever may be laid to his charge, joining to run him down, is joining the enemy to hurt a friend." Sir P. Francis's instinctive rage on such subjects as the author of Junius must have felt most deeply upon was very remarkable. The last greatest effort which that shallow, violent, and unprincipled writer made, was against the illustrious judge, and it was attended with a signal discomfiture, sufficient to account

for his ceasing to write under a name thus exposed to contempt for an arrogance which no resources sustained. Hence the bitterness with which the name of Mansfield was recollected by Sir P. Francis, suited exceedingly well the hypothesis of his identity with Junius; and Horne Tooke's hatred of Francis seems to betoken a suspicion, on his part, of some connection with the anonymous writer. His warfare with Wilkes, whom both Junius and Francis always defended, is as well known as his controversy with Junius.

No man out of office all his life, and out of Parliament all but a few months of its later period, ever acted so conspicuous a part in the political warfare of his times as Horne Tooke. From his earliest years he had devoted himself to the cause of liberty, and had given up the clerical profession because its duties interfered with secular controversy, which he knew to be his proper element. With the pursuits of the bar he perhaps unjustly conceived that this kind of partisanship could be more easily reconciled; but the indelible nature of English orders prevented him from being admitted a member of the legal profession; and he was thus thrown upon the world of politics and of letters for an occupation. His talents in both these spheres were of a high order. To great perspicacity, uncommon quickness of apprehension, a ready wit, much power of application, he joined a cautious circumspection, and calm deliberation not often found in such company, and possessed a firmness of purpose not to be daunted by any danger, a steady perseverance not to be relaxed by difficulties, but rather to be warmed into new zeal by any attempts at opposition. That he was crafty, however, as well as sagacious and reflecting, soon appeared manifest; and when he was found often to put others forward on the stage, while he himself prompted behind the scenes, or moved the wires of the puppet, a distrust of him grew up which enabled plain dealers, pursuing a more straightforward course, to defeat him when they happened to fall out, although their resources were in every respect incomparably less extensive. Notwithstanding this defect, fertile in expedi-

ents, bold in council, confident of his own powers, his influence was very great with the popular party, to whom indeed he was very largely recommended by the mere facility of writing when compositions were wanted on the spur of the occasion, and the power of attacking their adversaries and defeating their friends, through the press, now first become a great engine of political force. For many years therefore he was the adviser and partisan of greatest weight among the high liberty party, that body which numbers its supporters out of doors by the million, and yet is often almost unrepresented in either house of Parliament; that body which regards the interests of the people, in other words its own interests, as everything, and the schemes, the tactics, the conflicts, of the regular parties, as nothing, except a proof of party being a game played for the interests of a few under the guise of public principle.

Personal considerations, as well as strongly-entertained opinions, gave this view of party a strong hold over Mr. Tooke's mind. He had never become acquainted with the Whig leaders, except in conflict. With those of the opposite faction of course he never could amalgamate. The aristocratic and exclusive nature of Whig society, the conviction then prevailing, and at all times acted upon, that the whole interests of the state are wrapt up in those of "the party," while those of the party are implied by the concerns of a few great families, their dependents, and their favourites—was sure to keep at an unpassable distance one who, like Mr. Tooke, felt his own real importance, was unwilling to measure it by the place he held in the estimation of some powerful lord or more puissant lady, and was determined not to substitute for it the base nominal value attached to obsequious servility.

In many of their objections to the regular parties in the state, Horne Tooke, and those with whom he acted, were very possibly right; and the friends of liberal principles certainly have had abundant reason to lament the misconduct of that party which came the nearest themselves in the line of policy they approved. But

it would be the greatest mistake in the world to suppose that those persons had any claims to superior patriotism, on the ground of abjuring all party association, or even that they conducted their own affairs as a faction upon less exclusive principles. The people at large, whom they counselled and generally led, might well object to the abuse of the party principle, and might deny the right either of Whig or Tory to dictate their opinions; but Mr. Tooke and his friends, who assumed to be the popular leaders, were banded together in as regular and compact a body as ever flocked under the standards of the government or the opposition; they acted together in concert; they gave up lesser differences of individual opinion for the purpose of joining to gain some greater advantage on grounds common to all; nay, they were as jealous of any Whig interference as the Whigs could be of them, and had a coterie of their own, with all the littleness of such assemblages, just as much as Devonshire House or Holland House. The table of some worthy alderman was at one time their resort; the country residence of an elderly gentleman, who intended to leave Mr. Horne his fortune but only gave him his name of Tooke, was afterwards their haunt; latterly, the residence of the grammarian himself received the initiated; and it was still more rare, perhaps, to see a regular Whig face in any of those very patriotic and very select circles than to meet Mr. Tooke himself under the roof of the patricians. The acquisition of office was, perhaps, much less the object in view with those popular chiefs; it certainly was placed at a far greater distance from their grasp; but they had as little tolerance for any difference of opinion with their own creed, as little charity for the errors of those who went half-way with them towards their goal, and as great contempt or dislike of their persons, as if they had gone under any of the appellatives which distinguish the parliamentary divisions of politicians.

That Mr. Tooke could take the field in political conflict as well as rule the councils of the people by his wisdom, was constantly made sufficiently apparent. If

the pen of a ready writer were wanted, none more ready to take up whatever gauntlet the literary enemies of freedom might throw down, or to rouse the sleeping lion of state prosecution. If the scene of the fight lay on the hustings, the Parson of Brentford was one of the most skilful and readiest to address the gathered multitude. If, in either capacity, as a writer or as a speaker, he came within the fangs of the law, those who kept him from conducting the suits of others soon found that he was the most able and skilful advocate of his own. Whether the contest were to be maintained with the scribes of the treasury through the press, or its candidates at public meetings, or its lawyers in the courts of justice, he was ready with his pen, his tongue, his learning; and he seldom left any antagonist reason to gratulate himself on the opponent he had met or the victory he had won. His conduct of his own defence, against a prosecution for libel at the breaking out of the American war, when he had no assistance of counsel; and his cross-examination of the witnesses, when tried for high treason in 1794, having the powerful aid of Mr. Erskine, were both justly admired, as displaying great address, readiness, presence of mind, and that circumspection which distinguished him in all situations, making him a far more safe counsellor than the high popular party almost ever at any other time possessed.

But it was not in action only that he distinguished himself, and gained great and deserved popularity. He suffered and suffered much for his principles. A bold and a just denunciation of the attack made upon our American brethren, which now-a-days would rank among the very mildest and tamest effusions of the periodical press, condemned him to a prison for twelve months, destined to have been among the most active of his life. His exertions to obtain parliamentary reform and good government for the country, accompanied with no conspiracy, and marked by no kind of personal or party violence, subjected his house to be ransacked by police officers, his repositories to be broken open, his private correspondence to be exposed, his daughters to be

alarmed and insulted, his person, now bent down with grievous infirmities, to be hurried away in the night, undergo an inquisitorial examination before a secret council, be flung into prison, and only released after months of confinement, and after putting his life in jeopardy by a trial for high treason. These are sufferings which fair-weather politicians know nothing of, which the members of the regular parties see at a distance, using them for topics of declamation against their adversaries, and as the material for turning sentences in their holiday speeches—but they are sufferings which make men dear to the people; which are deeply engraved on the public mind; which cause them to be held in everlasting remembrance and love and honour by all reflecting men; because they set the seal upon all professions of patriotism, and, bolting the wheat from the chaff in the mass of candidates for public favour, show who be they that care for their principles, by showing who can suffer for them, and tell with a clear voice upon whom it is safe to rely as the votaries of public virtue.

That Mr. Tooke should after these trials have remained out of Parliament, to enter which he made so many attempts, could only be accounted for by the corrupt elective system which was then established. No sooner had a partial reform been effected than Cobbett and even Hunt found a seat for populous places. But the only time that Mr. Tooke ever sat in the House of Commons he was returned by the most close of all close boroughs, Old Sarum itself, then the property of Lord Camelford, the most harmless of whose vagaries was placing this eminent person in Parliament. The old objection however of holy orders being indelible, was now revived; and though it was not determined that he whom it had prevented from practising as a lawyer was thereby also incapacitated from exercising the functions of a legislator, yet a declaratory act was passed which prevented any priest from ever sitting in the House of Commons. The act was so far retrospective that affected all persons then in orders.

By this proceeding neither Mr. Tooke nor the country sustained any loss. His talents appeared not to

be, at least now that he had reached a late period of life, well fitted for parliamentary debate. On the hustings he had shone with great brilliancy. Even in the warfare of the bar he was well calculated to excel. For addressing the multitude with effect he had many of the highest qualifications. Without any power whatever of declamation, with no mastery over the passions, with a manner so far from ever partaking at all of vehemence that it was hardly animated in the ordinary degree of conversation, he nevertheless was so clear in his positions, so distinct in his statements of fact, so ready in his repartee, so admirably gifted with the knowledge of what topics would tell best on the occasion, so dexterous in the employment of short, plain, strong arguments, so happy in the use of his various and even motley information, could so powerfully season his discourse with wit and with humour, and so boldly, even recklessly, handle the most perilous topics of attack, whether on individuals or on establishments, that it may be doubted if any man in modern times, when the line has been drawn between refined eloquence and mob oratory, ever addressed the multitude with more certain, more uniform success. Whoever reads the speeches at the different Westminster elections of 1790, 1796, and 1802, when he stood against both the government candidate and Mr. Fox, will at once perceive how vastly superior his were to those of the other speakers. But, as Mr. Fox was generally very unsuccessful on such occasions, this comparison would furnish an inadequate notion of his great merits in this kind. It is more material to add, that his slow, composed manner, and clear enunciation, enabling what he said to be easily taken down, the reports which are penned convey a very accurate idea of the singular degree in which he excelled. On the other hand, he was peculiarly fitted for the very different contests of forensic skill, by his learning, his subtlety, his quick and sure perception of resemblances and of diversities, which, with his unabashed boldness, his presence of mind, and his imperturbable temper, made him a most powerful advocate, whether before a judge

in arguing points of law, or in the conduct of the inquiry for a jury's decision. That he was wholly impregnable in the position which he took, both the court felt when its efforts to stop him or turn aside his course were found to be utterly vain, and the opposing advocate who never for an instant could succeed in putting him down with the weight of authority and of station, any more than in circumventing him by the niceties of technical lore. All that the Mansfields and the Bullers could ever effect, was to occasion a repetition, with aggravating variations, of the offensive passages; all that Attorney-Generals could obtain was some new laughter from the audience at their expense. Unruffled by the vexation of interruptions, as undaunted by power; by station, by professional experience, by the truly formidable conspiracy against all interlopers, in which the whole bar, almost filling the court on great occasions, really is in a considerable degree, but appears to be in a far larger extent combined—there stood the layman, rejected as a barrister, relying only on his own resources, and in the most plain and homely English, with more than the self-possession and composure of a judge who had the whole court at his feet, uttered the most offensive opinions, garnished with the broadest and bitterest sarcasms at all the dogmas and all the functionaries whom almost all other men were agreed in deeming exempt from attack and even too venerable for observation. That his coolness and boldness occasionally encroached upon the adjoining province of audacity, which might even be termed impudence, cannot be denied. When he would turn the laugh against a person who had offended him, or had defeated him, there was nothing at which he would stick. Thus Mr. Beaufoy having fallen short of his expectations in his evidence to character, or to political and personal intimacy at the treason trials, he resented his coldness and refreshed his recollection by a story, invented at the moment. “Was it not when you came to complain to me of Mr. Pitt not returning your bow in Parliament-street?” And in private society he was as unscrupulous in dealing with

facts, as has been remarked when speaking of the dislike he bore Sir P. Francis. It was another defect in his forensic exertions that he was apt to be over-refining ; but this and other faults need excite little wonder, when we reflect that on those occasions he laboured under the extreme disadvantage of entire want of practice. The wonder is that one who was only three or four times in a court of justice should have displayed a talent and a tact of which experienced advocates might have been proud.

When he came into the House of Commons, where earlier in life he certainly would have had great success, he entirely failed. One speech, that in his own case, was favourably received ; but on the few other occasions on which he came forward, he was without any dispute unsuccessful. His hustings habits and topics were entirely unsuited to the more severe genius of the place ; and he was too old to lay them aside, that he might clothe himself in the parliamentary attire.

But much and justly as he was distinguished in his own time both among popular leaders, and as a martyr for popular principles, it is as a philosophical grammarian that his name will reach the most distant ages. To this character his pretensions were of the highest class. Acumen not to be surpassed, learning quite adequate to the occasion, a strong predilection for the pursuit, qualified him to take the first place, and to leave the science, scanty when his inquiries began, enlarged and enriched by his discoveries ; for discoveries he made as incontestably as ever did the follower of physical science by the cognate methods of inductive investigation.

The principle upon which his system is founded excels in simplicity, and is eminently natural and reasonable. As all our knowledge relates primarily to things, as mere existence is manifestly the first idea which the mind can have, as it is simple without involving any process of reasoning—substantives are evidently the first objects of our thoughts, and we learn their existence before we contemplate their actions, motions, or changes. Motion is a complex and not a simple idea ; it is gained from

the comparison of two places or positions, and drawing the conclusion that a change has happened. Action, or the relation between the agent and the act, is still more complex: it implies the observation of two events following one another, but, until we have pursued this sequence very often, we never could think of connecting them together. Those actions which we ourselves perform are yet less simple, and the experience which teaches us our own thoughts must be accompanied with more reflection. As for other ideas of a general or abstract nature, they are still later of being distinctly formed. Hence the origin of language must be traced to substantives, to existences, to simple apprehensions, to things. Having given names to these, we proceed to use those names in expressing change, action, motion, suffering, manners of doing, modes of suffering or of being. Thus verbs are employed, and they are obtained from substantives. Relations, relative positions, comparisons, contrasts, affinities, negatives, exclamations follow; and the power of expressing these is obtained from substantives and from verbs. So that all language becomes simply, naturally, rationally, resolved into substantives as its element, or substantives and verbs themselves being acquired from substantives.

The simple grandeur of this leading idea, which runs through the whole of Mr. Tooke's system, at once recommends it to our acceptance. But the details of the theory are its great merit; for he followed it into every minute particular of our language, and only left it imperfect in confining his speculations to the English tongue, while doubtless the doctrine is of universal application. He had great resources for the performance of the task which he thus set himself. A master of the old Saxon, the root of our noble language; thoroughly and familiarly acquainted with all our best writers; sufficiently skilled in other tongues ancient and modern, though only generally, and, for any purposes but that of his Anglo-Saxon inquiry, rather superficially, he could trace with a clear and steady eye the relations and derivations of all our parts of speech; and in delivering

his remarks, whether to illustrate his own principles, or to expose the errors of other theories, or to controvert and expose to ridicule his predecessors, his never-failing ingenuity and ready wit stood him in such constant stead, that he has made one of the driest subjects in the whole range of literature or science, one of the most amusing and even lively of books; nor did any one ever take up the *Diversions of Purley** (as he has quaintly chosen to call it) and lay down till some other avocation tore it from his hands.

The success of this system has been such as its great essential merits, and its more superficial attractions combined, might have led us to expect. All men are convinced of its truth; and as everything which had been done before was superseded by it, so nothing has since been effected unless in pursuing its views and building upon its solid foundations. One only fault is to be found, not so much with the system as with its effects upon the understanding and habits of the ingenious author. Its brilliant success made him an etymologist and grammarian in everything. He became prone to turn all controversies into discussions on terms. He saw roots and derivatives in everything; and was apt to think he had discovered a decisive argument, or solved a political or a metaphysical or an ethical problem when he had only found the original meaning of a word. Thus he would hold that the law of libel was unjust and absurd because *libel* means a little book; no kind of proof that there may not be a substantive offence which goes by such a name, any more than forgery is denied to be a crime, although the original of the name is the very innocent operation of hammering iron softened in the fire. But he also in the case referred to left wholly out of view half the phrase; for it is certain that libel, or *libellus*, is not the Latin of libel, but *libellus famosus*, a defamatory writing.

But this etymological pedantry was engrafted upon a

* *Ἐπεὶ πτεροεντα* is the more classical synonyme which it bears.

rich stock of sound and healthy constitutional learning. Few men were better acquainted with the history of his country in all its periods. The antiquities of our language were hardly better known to him, or the changes which it had undergone, than the antiquities and the progress of our mixed constitution. His opinions might be strongly tinged with democracy, but towards a republic he had no leaning whatever; and he erred fully as much in undervaluing the people's capacity of self-government, as in the belief of their having anciently enjoyed more power in the monarchy than they ever possessed. In the virtues of representative government, the great discovery of modern times, by which popular rights are rendered capable of exercise on a large scale, and a democratic scheme of polity becomes reconcilable with an extensive territory and a numerous community, he had the most entire confidence; but he would have pushed the right of suffrage farther than the education of the people rendered safe; and it was a great inconsistency in his doctrines, that while he held the notion of the whole people governing themselves to be utterly chimerical and absurd, he yet desired to see the whole people yearly select their rulers. Nor can we trace in any of his writings the idea, so natural, and indeed so obviously flowing from his own principles, that in proportion as the people became better informed and more experienced, the extension of their rights becomes safe, and if safe, becomes also just and necessary, until at length they are fitted for a much larger share in managing their own affairs than any merely parliamentary reformer has ever yet assigned to them.

Subject to these remarks, and to the further observation, that, like all learned men and legal antiquaries, he set too great store by antiquity, guided himself too much by precedent, and was not sufficiently alive to the necessity of new schemes of policy in an unaltered and improved state of circumstances, his constitutional knowledge, and the use made of it was of very great value. He was ever ready to stand on the firm ground

of right, and to press the claims of men to their legal privileges. He brought many important constitutional questions to a fair issue; he was the patron, the supporter, the fellow-labourer of all who dared to resist arbitrary power, and would make a stand for the rights of man, and the principles of the constitution. In the pursuit of these things he could resist both the frowns of power and the clamours of the mob; and although his life was spent as one among the leaders of the high popular party, he was as often in controversy with others who having no learning like his, and no discretion to guide them, went extravagant lengths to please the multitude, and as often the object of popular dislike, as he was of favour from the mass of his followers. In his controversy with Wilkes, he showed his courage abundantly; he was clearly in the right; he was attacked in a manner wholly vile and odious by a profligate man, and an unprincipled politician; he maintained his ground to the satisfaction of the reasoning and reflecting few; but he was the object of general and fierce popular indignation for daring to combat the worthless idol of the mob.

In private life he was eminently agreeable, and his manners were those of a high-bred gentleman. His conversation was admirably diversified with both wit and argument, ordinary and rare information. Its vice was that of his understanding—a constant pursuit of paradox;—and that of his character—a love of victory, and a carelessness about truth. His etymological renown brought him in contact with many men of letters; and his ancient antagonist, Lord Thurlow, hopeless of living to see the last part of the *Επεα πτερόεντα*, proposed to make his acquaintance, that he might discuss its subject with him. They met accordingly, the ex-chancellor volunteering a visit to Wimbledon, as being by a little the less infirm of the two. A considerable intimacy thus grew up between these veterans, who were probably reconciled even on political scores by their common enmity to the powerful minister of the day.

LORD CASTLEREAGH.

WE have stepped aside from contemplating the figures of those who had the confidence of George III., and who also presided over the councils of George IV., during the regency and during his reign, in order to consider three of their opponents; but it is time that we return to survey others of the leading men in whose hands the guidance of the state was placed, until the period towards the end of his reign, when the Tory party was broken up by the differences between Mr. Canning and his colleagues. Those men also belong to the times of George III. They were, like Lord Eldon, the component parts of Mr. Addington's administration, the cabinet which enjoyed his favour more than any he ever had after the dismissal of Lord North; and perhaps it was the mediocrity of their talents, in general, that chiefly recommended them to his regards. For with the exception of Lord Eldon and Lord St. Vincent, the list comprises no great names. Of the "safe and middling men," described jocularly by Mr. Canning, as "meaning very little, nor meaning that little well," Lord Castlereagh was, in some respects, the least inconsiderable. His capacity was greatly underrated from the poverty of his discourse; and his ideas passed for much less than they were worth, from the habitual obscurity of his expressions. But he was far above the bulk of his colleagues in abilities; and none of them all, except Lord St. Vincent, with whom he was officially connected only for a short time, exercised so large an influence over the fortunes of his country. Indeed, scarce any man of any party bore a more important place in public affairs, or occupies a larger space in the history of his times.

Few men of more limited capacity, or more meagre

acquirements than Lord Castlereagh possessed, had before his time ever risen to any station of eminence in our free country; fewer still have long retained it in a state, where mere court intrigue and princely favour have so little to do with men's advancement. But we have lived to see persons of more obscure merit than Lord Castlereagh rise to an equal station in this country. Of sober and industrious habits, and become possessed of business-like talents by long experience, he was a person of the most commonplace abilities. He had a reasonable quickness of apprehension and clearness of understanding, but nothing brilliant or in any way admirable marked either his conceptions or his elocution. Nay, to judge of his intellect by his eloquence, we should certainly have formed a very unfair estimate of its perspicacity. For, though it was hardly possible to underrate its extent or comprehensiveness, it was very far from being confused and perplexed in the proportion of his sentences: and the listener who knew how distinctly the speaker could form his plans, and how clearly his ideas were known to himself, might, comparing small things with great, be reminded of the prodigious contrast between the distinctness of Oliver Cromwell's understanding, and the hopeless confusion and obscurity of his speech. No man, besides, ever attained the station of a regular debater in our Parliament with such an entire want of all classical accomplishments, and indeed of all literary provision whatsoever. While he never showed the least symptom of an information extending beyond the more recent volumes of the parliamentary debates, or possibly the files of the newspapers only, his diction set all imitation, perhaps all description, at defiance. It was with some an amusement to beguile the tedious hours of their unavoidable attendance upon the poor, tawdry, ravelled thread of his sorry discourse, to collect a kind of *ana* from the fragments of mixed, incongruous, and disjointed images that frequently appeared in it. "The features of the clause"—"the ignorant impatience of the relaxation of taxation"—"sets of circumstances coming

up and circumstances going down"—"men turning their backs upon themselves"—"the honourable and learned gentleman's wedge getting into the loyal feelings of the manufacturing classes"—"the constitutional principle wound up in the bowels of the monarchical principle"—"the Herculean labour of the honourable and learned member, who will find himself quite disappointed when he has at last brought forth his Hercules"—(by a slight confounding of the mother's labour which produced that hero, with his own exploits which gained him immortality)—these are but a few, and not the richest samples, by any means, of a rhetoric which often baffled alike the gravity of the treasury bench and the art of the reporter, and left the wondering audience at a loss to conjecture how any one could ever exist, endowed with humbler pretensions to the name of orator.

Wherefore, when the Tory party, "having a devil," preferred him to Mr. Canning for their leader, all men naturally expected that he would entirely fail to command even the attendance of the house while he addressed it; and that the benches, empty during his time, would only be replenished when his highly-gifted competitor rose. They were greatly deceived; they underrated the effect of place and power; they forgot that the representative of a government speaks "as one having authority, and not as the Scribes." But they also forgot that Lord Castlereagh had some qualities well fitted to conciliate favour, and even to provoke admiration, in the absence of everything like eloquence. He was a bold and fearless man; the very courage with which he exposed himself unabashed to the most critical audience in the world, while incapable of uttering two sentences of anything but the meanest matter, in the most wretched language; the gallantry with which he faced the greatest difficulties of a question; the unflinching perseverance with which he went through a whole subject, leaving untouched not one of its points, whether he could grapple with it or no, and not one of the adverse arguments, however forcibly and felicitously they had

been urged, neither daunted by recollecting the impression just made by his antagonist's brilliant display, nor damped by consciousness of the very rags in which he now presented himself—all this made him upon the whole rather a favourite with the audience whose patience he was taxing mercilessly, and whose gravity he ever and anon put to a very severe trial. Nor can any one have forgotten the kind of pride that mantled on the fronts of the Tory phalanx, when, after being overwhelmed with the powerful fire of the Whig opposition, or galled by the fierce denunciations of the Mountain, or harassed by the splendid displays of Mr. Canning, their chosen leader stood forth, and presenting the graces of his eminently patrician figure, flung open his coat, displayed an azure ribbon traversing a snow-white chest, and declared "his high satisfaction that he could now meet the charges against him face to face, and repel with indignation all that his adversaries were bold and rash enough to advance."

Such he was in debate; in council he certainly had far more resources. He possessed a considerable fund of plain sense not to be misled by any refinement of speculation, or clouded by any fanciful notions. He went straight to his point. He was brave politically as well as personally. Of this, his conduct on the Irish Union had given abundant proof; and nothing could be more just than the rebuke which, as connected with the topic of personal courage, we may recollect his administering to a great man who had passed the limits of parliamentary courtesy—"Every one must be sensible," he said, "that if any personal quarrel were desired, any insulting language used publicly where it could not be met as it deserved, was the way to prevent and not to produce such a rencounter." No one after that treated him with disrespect. The complaints made of his Irish administration were well grounded as regarded the corruption of the Parliament by which he accomplished the Union, though he had certainly no direct hand in the bribery practised; but they were entirely unfounded as regarded the cruelties practised dur-

ing and after the rebellion. Far from partaking in these atrocities, he uniformly and strenuously set his face against them. He was of a cold temperament and determined character, but not of a cruel disposition; and to him, more than perhaps to any one else, was owing the termination of the system stained with blood. It is another topic of high praise that he took a generous part against the faction which, setting themselves against all liberal, all tolerant government, sought to drive from their posts the two most venerable rulers with whom Ireland had ever been blessed, Cornwallis and Abercromby. Nor can it to be too often repeated that when his colleagues acting under Lord Clare had denounced Mr. Grattan, in the Lords' Report, as implicated in a guilty knowledge of the rebellion, he, and he alone, prevented the Report of the Commons from joining in the same groundless charge against the illustrious patriot. An intimation of this from a common friend, (who communicated the remarkable fact to the author of these pages,) alone prevented a personal meeting between the two upon a subsequent occasion.

Lord Castlereagh's foreign administration was as destitute of all merit as possible. No enlarged views guided his conduct; no liberal principles claimed his regard; no generous sympathies, no grateful feelings for the people whose sufferings and whose valour had accomplished the restoration of their national independence, prompted his tongue, when he carried forth from the land of liberty that influence which she had a right to exercise—she who had made such vast sacrifices, and was never in return to reap any the least selfish advantage. The representative of England among those powers whom her treasure and her arms had done so much to save, he ought to have held the language becoming a free state, and claimed for justice and for liberty the recognition which he had the better right to demand, that we gained nothing for ourselves after all our sufferings, and all our expenditure of blood as well as money. Instead of this, he flung himself at once and forever into the arms of the sovereigns—seemed to take

a vulgar pride in being suffered to become their associate—appeared desirous, with the vanity of an upstart elevated unexpectedly into higher circles, of forgetting what he had been, and qualifying himself for the company he now kept, by assuming their habits—and never pronounced any of those words so familiar with the English nation and with English statesmen, in the mother tongue of a limited monarchy, for fear that they might be deemed low-bred, and unsuited to the society of crowned heads, in which he was living, and to which they might prove as distasteful as they were unusual.

It is little to be wondered at, that those potentates found him ready enough with his defence of their Holy Alliance. When it was attacked in 1816, he began by denying that it meant anything at all. He afterwards explained it away as a mere pledge of pacific intentions, and a new security for the stability of the settlement made by the Congress of Vienna. Finally, when he was compelled to depart from the monstrous principles of systematic interference to which it gave birth, and to establish which it was originally intended, he made so tardy, so cold, so reluctant a protest against the general doctrine of the allies, that the influence of England could not be said to have been exerted at all in behalf of national independence, even if the protest had been unaccompanied with a *carte blanche* to the allies for all injuries they were offering to particular states in the genuine spirit of the system protested against. The allies issued from Troppau one manifesto, from Leybach another, against the free constitution which had just been established at Naples by a military force co-operating with a movement of the people. On the eve of the Parliament meeting (19th Jan. 1821), Lord Castlereagh delivered a note to the Holy Allies, expressing in feeble and measured terms a very meagre dissent from the principle of interference; but adding a peremptory disapproval of the means by which the Neapolitan revolution had been effected, and indicating very plainly that England would allow whatever they chose to do for the purpose of putting down the new government and re-

storing the old. It is certain that this kind of revolution is of all others the very worst, and to liberty the most unpropitious. It is also probable that the people of Naples knew not what they sought; nay, when they proclaimed the Spanish constitution, it is said there was no copy of it found in the whole city. Nevertheless the same kind of military movement had produced the destruction of the same constitution in Spain, and restored the power and prerogative of Ferdinand; and no exception had been ever taken to it, in that instance, either by the Holy Allies or by England. There could therefore be no doubt whatever, that this mode of effecting changes in a government was only displeasing to those parties when the change happened to be of a popular kind, and that a military revolution to restore or to found a despotic government, was a thing perfectly to their liking. Thus faintly dissented from as to the principle, and not even faintly opposed as to the particular instance, the three sovereigns deputed one of their number to march, and the Austrian troops ended, in a few days, all that the Neapolitan army had done in as many hours.

But late in 1822, Spain, or rather Madrid again became the scene of a revolutionary movement; and the people obtained once more a free form of government. Again the Holy Allies were at work; and, on this occasion, their manifestoes were directed to arm France with the authority of the League. First, an army was assembled on the Spanish frontier, under the stale pretext of some infectious disorder requiring a sanitary cordon; the same pretext on which the predecessors of the Holy Allies had in former times surrounded unhappy Poland with their armed hordes—the only difference being, that an epidemic was in that instance said to be raging among the cattle, and now it was supposed to be the plague among men. A great change had, however, now taken place in the British department of Foreign Affairs. Lord Castlereagh's sudden death had changed Mr. Canning's Indian destination, and placed him both at the head of the Foreign Office, and in the lead of the House of Commons. His views were widely different from those of

his predecessor. He was justly jealous of the whole principles and policy of the Holy Alliance; he was disgusted with the courtly language of the crafty and cruel despots who, under the mask of religious zeal, were enslaving Europe: he was indignant at the subservient part in those designs which England had been playing; and he was resolved that this obsequiousness should no longer disgrace his country. In America, he was determined that the colonies of Spain should be recognised as clothed with the independence which they had purchased by their valour; in Europe, he was fixed in the design of unchaining England from the chariot wheels of the Holy Allies. It is from this portion of his life, and from his having, in 1827, been joined by most of the more considerable Whigs, that men are accustomed to regard Mr. Canning as a man of liberal opinions. In no other respect did he differ from Lord Castlereagh, who was also a steady friend of Catholic Emancipation.

LORD LIVERPOOL.

THE eminent individual whom we have just been surveying* never rose to the place of ostensible Prime Minister, although for the last ten years of his life he exercised almost all its influence, and was the ministerial leader of the House of Commons. But Lord Liverpool was the chief under whom he served. He presided over the councils of England for a longer time than any other, excepting Walpole and Pitt, and for a period incomparably more glorious in all that is commonly deemed to constitute national renown. He was Prime Minister of England for fifteen years, after having filled in succession almost every political office, from under-secretary of state upwards; and passed his whole life, from the age of manhood, in the public service, save the single year that followed the death of Mr. Pitt. So long and so little interrupted a course of official prosperity was never, perhaps, enjoyed by any other statesman.

But this was not his only felicity. It happened to him, that the years during which the helm of the state, as it is called, was entrusted to his hands, were those of the greatest events, alike in negotiation, in war, in commerce, and in finance, which ever happened to illustrate or to checker the annals of Europe. He saw the power of France attain a pitch altogether unexampled, and embrace the whole of the continent, except Russia alone, hitherto believed safe in her distant position and enormous natural strength; but he saw her, too, invaded, her numerous armies overthrown, her almost inaccessible capital destroyed. Then followed the insurrection of conquered Germany—the defeat of victorious France—the war pushed into her territory—the advance of

* Lord Castlereagh.

the allies to the capital—the restoration of the ancient dynasty. By a singular coincidence, having signalised his outset in political life by a supposition which he propounded as possible—a march to Paris—this was then deemed so outrageous an absurdity that it became connected with his name as a standing topic of ridicule; yet he lived to see the impossibility realised, was Prime Minister when the event happened, and did not survive the dynasty which he had mainly contributed to restore. Peace was thus brought back, but without her sister, Plenty; and intestine discord now took the place of foreign war. He saw the greatest distress which this country had ever suffered in all the departments of her vast and various industry; agriculture sunk down, manufactures depressed to the earth, commerce struggling for existence, an entire stop put to all schemes for lightening the load of the public debt, and a convulsion in the value of all property, in the relations of all creditors and all debtors; in the operation of all contracts between man and man—the inevitable effects of a sudden and violent alteration of the currency, the standard of which his colleagues, twenty years before, had interfered to change. Gradually he saw trade, and agriculture, and industry in all its branches, again revive, but public discontent not subsiding; both in Ireland, which he mainly helped to misgovern, and in England, where he opposed all political improvement, he witnessed the tremendous effects of a people becoming more enlightened than their rulers; and the last years of his life were spent in vain efforts to escape from a sight of the torrent which he could not stem. It made an interlude in this long and varied political scene, that he consented to the worst act ever done by any English monarch, the persecution of his Queen for acts of hers and for purposes of his own, connected with a course of maltreatment to which the history of conjugal misdemeanor furnishes no parallel.

Yet, prodigious as is the importance, and singular as the variety of these events, which all happened during his administration—and although party ran higher and

took a far more personal turn during those fifteen years than at any other period of our political history—no minister, nay, few men in any subordinate public station, ever passed his time with so little ill-will directed towards himself, had so much forbearance shown him upon all occasions, nay, engaged uniformly so large a share of personal esteem. To what did he owe this rare felicity of his lot? How came it to pass that a station, in all other men's cases the most irksome, in his was easy—that the couch, so thorny to others, was to him of down? Whence the singular spectacle of the Prime Minister—the person primarily answerable for anything which is done amiss, and in fact often made to answer for whatever turns out unluckily through no possible fault of his own, or indeed of any man—should, by common consent, have been exempted from almost all blame; and that whoever attacked most bitterly all other public functionaries in any department, should have felt it no business of his to speak otherwise than respectfully, if not tenderly, or if not respectfully, yet with mild forbearance of him, who, having been all his life in high office, a party to every unpopular and unfortunate proceeding of the government, and never a changeling in any one of his political opinions, even in the most unpopular of all, was now for so many long years at the head of the national councils, and in the first instance, by the law of the constitution and in point of fact, answerable for whatever was done or whatever was neglected?

This question may, perhaps, be answered by observing that the abilities of Lord Liverpool were far more solid than shining, and that men are apt to be jealous, perhaps envious, certainly distrustful, of great and brilliant genius in statesmen. Respectable mediocrity offends nobody. Nay, as the great bulk of mankind feel it to be their own case, they perhaps have some satisfaction in being correctly represented by those who administer their affairs. Add to this, that the subject of these remarks was gifted with extraordinary prudence, displaying, from his earliest years, a rare discretion in all the parts of his con-

duct. Not only was there nothing of imagination, or extravagance, or any matter above the most ordinary comprehension, in whatever he spoke (excepting only his unhappy flight about marching to Paris, and which for many years seemingly sunk him in the public estimation) —but he spoke so seldom as to show that he never did so unless the necessity of the case required it; while his life was spent in the business of office, a thing eminently agreeable to the taste, because closely resembling the habits, of a nation composed of men of business. “That’s a good young man, who is always at his desk,” the common amount of civic panegyric to a virtuous apprentice, was in terms no doubt, often applied to Mr. Robert Jenkinson. “Here comes a worthy minister, whose days and nights have been passed in his office, and not in idle talking,” might be the slight transformation by which this early eulogy was adapted to his subsequent manhood and full-blown character. Nor must it be forgotten that a more inoffensive speaker has seldom appeared in Parliament. He was never known to utter a word at which any one could take exception. He was besides (a much higher praise) the most fair and candid of all debaters. No advantage to be derived from a misrepresentation, or even an omission, ever tempted him to forego the honest and the manly satisfaction of stating the fact as it was, treating his adversary as he deserved, and at least reciting fairly what had been urged against him, if he could not successfully answer it. In these respects, Mr. Canning furnished a contrast which was eminently beneficial to Lord Liverpool with whom he was so often, absurdly enough, compared, for no better reason than that they were of the same standing, and began life together and in the same service. But, in another respect he gave less offence than his brilliant contemporary. A wit, though he amuses for the moment, unavoidably gives frequent umbrage to grave and serious men, who don’t think public affairs should be lightly handled, and are constantly falling into the error that, when a person is arguing the most conclusively, by showing the gross and ludicrous absurdity

of his adversary's reasoning, he is jesting and not arguing; while the argument is in reality more close and astringent, the more he shows the opposite position to be grossly ludicrous—that is, the more effective the wit becomes. But though all this is perfectly true, it is equally certain that danger attends such courses with the common run of plain men. Hence all lawyers versed in the practice of *Nisi Prius*, are well aware of the risk they run by being witty, or ingenious and fanciful before a jury; unless their object be to reduce the damages in an absurd case, by what is called laughing it out of court; and you can almost tell, at a great distance, whether the plaintiff or the defendant's counsel is speaking to the jury, by observing whether he is grave, solemn, and earnest in his demeanor, or light and facetious. Nor is it only by wit that genius offends; flowers of imagination, flights of oratory, great passages, are more admired by the critic than relished by the worthy baronets who darken the porch of Boodle's—chiefly answering to the names of Sir Robert and Sir John; and the solid traders—the very good men who stream along the Strand from 'Change towards St. Stephen's Chapel, at five o'clock, to see the business of the country done by the sovereign's servants. A pretty long course of observation on these component parts of parliamentary audience, begets some doubts if noble passages (termed “fine flourishes”) be not taken by them as something personally offensive.

Of course, we speak not of quotations—these, no doubt, and reasonably, are so considered—especially if in the unknown tongues; though even an English quotation is not by any means safe, and certainly requires an apology. But we refer to such fine passages as Mr. Canning often indulged himself, and a few of his hearers with; and which certainly seemed to be received as an insult by whole benches of men accustomed to distribute justice at Sessions—the class of the

—Pannosus vacuis ædilis Ulubris—

—him whom Johnson called (translating)

The wisest justice on the banks of Trent.

These worthies, the dignitaries of the empire, resent such flights as liberties taken with them; and always say, when others force them to praise—"Well, well—but it was out of place. We have nothing to do with King Priam here—or with a heathen god, such as Æolus;—those kind of folks are very well in Pope's Homer and Dryden's Virgil;—but, as I said to Sir Robert, who sat next me, What have you or I to do with them matters? I like a good, plain man of business, like young Mr. Jenkinson—a man of the pen and the desk, like his father before him—and who never speaks when he is not wanted: let me tell you, Mr. Canning speaks too much, by half. Time is short—there are only twenty-four hours in the day, you know."

It may further be observed, that, with the exception of the Queen's case, there was no violent or profligate act of the government, nor any unfortunate or unpopular measure, which could not, with some colour of justice, be fixed upon some of Lord Liverpool's colleagues, in case of himself, if men were thus favourably disposed. Lord Castlereagh was foreign minister, and had conducted our negotiations while abroad in person. He was, therefore, alone, held accountable for all the mistakes of that department; and especially for the countenance given to the designs of the Holy Allies. So, notwithstanding his known liberality upon Irish questions, and his equally certain opposition to the cruelties by which the history of the government during a rebellion of 1798 was disfigured, he had committed the sin, never by Irishmen to be forgiven or forgotten—the carrying through of the Union, and abating the greatest public nuisance of modern times, the profligate, shameless, and corrupt Irish parliament. Hence, all the faults and all the omissions of the Ministry, in respect of Irish affairs, were laid upon his single head by every true Irishman; while Lord Liverpool, himself a party to the worst policy of past times, was in his own person, as head of the government for so many years, the main obstacle to the repeal of the Penal Code; and yet he escaped all censure in the perspicacious and equitable distribution of Irish

justice. For obstructing all Law Reform, and for delay in the administration of justice in practice, Lord Eldon offered a convenient object of attack; and on him all the hostile fire was directed, being thus drawn off from the favourite premier. Even the blunders committed in finance, though belonging to the peculiar department of the First Lord of the Treasury, were never marked in connection with any name but Mr. Vansittart's. The boast of prosperity—the schemes of Bank discount which accompanied it, exacerbating the malady of speculation one year, and the misery of panic the next—were as much Lord Liverpool's as Mr. Robinson's; but the latter alone was blamed, or ever named in reference to these great calamities. Nay, even the violent revolution suddenly effected in the currency, and effected without the least precaution to guard against the country repaying twenty-five shillings for every twenty shillings borrowed—was reckoned exclusively the work of Mr. Peel, as if he, being out of office altogether, had been at the head of the government; while the Whigs stepped in to claim their share of the public gratitude and applause for this great, but not very well-considered, operation.

It was curious to observe the care with which, all the while, these selections were made of parties on whom to lay the blame. No popular outcry ever assailed Lord Liverpool. While others were the objects of alternate execration and scorn, he was generally respected, never assailed. The fate that befel him was that which might have mortified others but well suited his tastes, to be little thought of, less talked about, or if, in debate, any measure was to be exposed—any means to be attacked—means were ever found, nay, pains were taken to “assure the House that nothing was meant against the respected nobleman at the head of His Majesty's government, for whom we all entertained feelings of *et cetera*, and of *et cetera*, and of *et cetera*.”

Such was the happy lot of Lord Liverpool; such are the comforts which a respectable mediocrity of talents

with its almost constant companion, an extreme measure of discretion in the use of them, confers upon its possessor in lieu of brilliant reputation, with its attendant detraction and hate. While the conqueror mounts his triumphal car, and hears the air rent with the shouts of his name, he hears, too, the malignant whisper appointed to remind him, that the trumpet of fame blunts not the tooth of calumny; nay, he descends from his eminence when the splendid day is over, to be made the victim of never-ending envy, and of slander which is immortal, as the price of that day's delirious enjoyment; and all the time safety and peace is the lot of the humbler companion, who shared his labours without partaking of his renown, and who, if he has enjoyed little, has paid and suffered less.

Accordingly, it is fit that one thing should be added to what has been recorded of the general forbearance exercised towards this fortunate minister; it was nearly akin to neglect or indifference, though certainly not at all savoring of contempt. There was nothing striking or shining in his qualities, which were the solid, useful, well-wearing ones of business-like habits and information. While great measures were executed, no one thought of Lord Liverpool. When men came to reflect, they found he was still Prime Minister; but he retired so much from public view that he was seldom thought of. Thus, if he had no blame when faults were committed, or things went wrong, so he had no praise for what was well done, or gratitude for many signal successes. He was, in truth, hardly ever considered in the matter.

He was a plain, every-day kind of a speaker, who never rose above the range either of his audience, or his topic; and chose his topic so as to require no strength of persuasion beyond what he possessed. He was clear and distinct enough, without even, in that first essential of business speaking, being distinguished for his excellence above almost any one who is accustomed to state a case or take part in a debate. His diction was on a level with his matter: it had nothing

rare, or adorned, or happy; but though plain enough, it was not pure, or more pure than the sources from which he derived it—the parliamentary debates, the official despatches, and the newspapers of the day. If, adopting the middle style, or even the *humile genus dicendi*, he had maintained in his language the standard of purity, he would have passed, and justly, for a considerable artist in that kind;—as Swift is always praised for being a model of one style of writing. But it would be very wide, indeed, of the truth to say that the threefold nature of Mr. Jenkinson, Lord Hawkesbury, and Lord Liverpool, ever presented a model of anything, except perhaps safe mediocrity: of a pure or correct style, he assuredly was no sample. He “met the question”—when “on his legs” he would take upon himself “to assert, as he had caught the speaker’s eye” that no “influential person” of “His Majesty’s actual government,” had ever “advocated liberalism,” less than “the humble individual who now addressed them,” and whose duty it was “to justify the proposed bill.” In short, he showed plainly enough that a man might avoid lofty flights, and stick to his native earth, without habitually walking in clean places; and that he who is not bold enough to face the perils of the deep, may hug the shore too close, and make shipwreck upon its inequalities.

In council he was safe if not fertile of expedient. He seldom roused his courage up to bold measures; and was one of the narrow minds whom Lord Wellesly quitted, when he found them resolved neither to make peace nor to wage war with any reasonable chance of success; and whom the prodigious achievements of his illustrious brother, contrary to all probability, and beyond every rational hope, united, with the madness of Napoleon and the severity of a northern winter, to rescue from the position which their puny councils had so well earned, and so richly deserved. He had not the spirit or the political courage required for great emergencies; yet could he be driven

by the fear of losing office, to patronise the most disgraceful attempt ever made in this country by royal caprice; and thus encountered the imminent peril of civil war. This is, indeed, the darkest spot in his history; and another is connected with it. He lost his head entirely when the people had defeated a body of the troops at the Queen's funeral; and is understood to have given orders for resorting to extremities—orders to which the cooler courage of the military commanders happily postponed their obedience.

The candour which he ever displayed in debate has been already marked. It was a part of the natural honesty of his character, which power had not corrupted, and no eagerness of parliamentary warfare could interrupt. His general worth as a man was always acknowledged; and this added very justly to the prevailing good opinion which he enjoyed among his countrymen, almost without distinction of party. It may be gathered from our former observations that we regard this good opinion to have been somewhat overdone; and that justice did not at all sanction the distribution of praise and of blame which the country made between him and his colleagues.

MR. TIERNEY.

AMONG the supporters of the Addington ministry, though never a member of it, was one who, though far enough from filling a first-rate place among statesmen, was still farther from being an inconsiderable person in debate, where he had his own particular line, and in that eminently excelled, Mr. Tierney. He had been bred to the law, was called to the bar, and for a short time frequented the western circuit, on which he succeeded Mr. Pitt in the office of Recorder, or keeper of the circuit books and funds; a situation filled by the youngest member of the profession on the several circuits each successive year. He soon, however, like his illustrious predecessor, left the hard and dull, and for many years cheerless path, which ends in the highest places in the state, and the most important functions of the constitution; and devoted himself to the more inviting, but more thorny and even more precarious pursuit of politics; in which merit, if it never fails of earning fame and distinction, very often secures nothing more solid to its possessor; and which has the further disadvantage of leading to power or to disappointment, according to the conduct of the caprice of others, as much as of the candidate himself. No man more than Mr. Tierney lived to experience the truth of this remark; and no man more constantly advised his younger friends to avoid the fascinations which concealed such snares and led to those rocks. In truth no one had a better right to give this warning; for his talents were peculiarly fitted for the contentions of the legal profession, and must have secured him great eminence had he remained at the bar; but they were accompanied with some defects which proved exceedingly injurious to his success as a

statesman. He possessed sufficient industry to master any subject, and, until his health failed, to undergo any labour. His understanding was of that plain and solid description which wears well, and is always more at the command of its possessor than the brilliant qualities that dazzle the vulgar. To any extraordinary quickness of apprehension he laid no claim; but he saw with perfect clearness, and if he did not take a very wide range, yet within his appointed scope, his ideas were strongly formed, and when he stated them luminously expressed. Everything refined he habitually rejected; partly as above his comprehension, partly as beneath his regard; and he was wont to value the efforts of fancy still lower than the feats of subtilty; so that there was something extremely comical in witnessing the contrast of his homely and somewhat literal understanding with the imaginative nature of Erskine, when they chanced to meet in conversation. But if refinement and fancy, when tried upon him apart, met with this indifferent reception, their combination in anything romantic, especially when it was propounded as a guide of conduct, fared still worse at his hands; and if he ever found such views erected into a test or standard for deciding either on public or on private affairs, he was apt to treat the fabric rather as the work of an unsound mind, than as a structure to be seriously exposed and taken to pieces by argument.

Nevertheless, with all this shunning of fanciful matter, no one's mind was more accessible to groundless imaginations; provided they entered by one quarter, on which certainly lay his weak side as a politician. A man undeniably of cool personal courage; a debater of as unquestioned boldness and vigour—he was timid in council; always saw the gloomy side of things; could scarcely ever be induced to look at any other aspect; and tormented both himself and others with endless doubts and difficulties, and apprehensions of events barely possible, as if in human affairs, from the crossing of a street to the governing of a kingdom, men were not

compelled either to stand stock-still, or to expose themselves to innumerable risks—acting, of course, only on probabilities, and these often not very high ones. It was a singular thing to observe how complete a change the same individual had undergone in passing from the consultation to the debate. The difference was not greater between Erskine out of court and in his professional garb. He was firm in the line once taken, against which he had raised a host of objections, and around which he had thrown a cloud of doubts; he was as bold in meeting real enemies as he had been timid in conjuring up imaginary risks; prompt, vigorous, determined, he carried on the debate; and he who in a distant view of it could only descry difficulties and create confusion, when the tug of war approached, and he came to close quarters, displayed an abundance of resources which astonished all who had been harassed with his hesitation, or confounded by his perplexities, or vexed with his apprehensions. He was now found to have no eyes but for the adversary whom his whole soul was bent upon meeting; nor any circumspection but for the possibility of a reply which he was resolved to cut off.

It is probable, however, that this defect in his character as a politician had greatly increased as he grew older. In early times he was among the more forward of the Reformers. When he quitted the bar he offered himself as candidate for several vacant seats and was unsuccessful. He attended the debates at the East India House as a proprietor; and took an active part in them. He was an assiduous member of the “Society of Friends of the People,” and drew up the much and justly celebrated petition in which that useful body laid before the House of Commons all the more striking particulars of its defective title to the office of representing the people, which that House then, as now, but with far less reason, assumed. He contested the borough of Southwark more than once, and was seated ultimately in 1796, and by a committee before which he conducted his own case with an ability so striking, that all who witnessed it at

once augured most favourably of his prospects in the House, and confessed that his leaving the bar had alone prevented him from filling the highest place among the ornaments of Westminster Hall. In that contest, his acuteness, his plain and homely sense, his power of exposing a sophism, of ridiculing a refinement, shone conspicuous; and his inimitable manner—a manner above all others suited to his style of speaking and thinking, and singularly calculated to affect a popular audience—was added to the other qualities which he showed himself possessed of, and by which he won and kept hold of the committee's undivided attention.

His entry into the House of Commons was made at a sufficiently remarkable period of time. The Whig opposition had just taken the most absurd and inconsistent, as well as most unjustifiable step which ever party or public men resorted to, in order to show the bitterness of their disappointment, to justify their enemies in deducing all their actions from selfish motives, and to lend the doctrine some plausibility, which the enemies of all party connection hold, when they deny its use and regard it as a mere association for interested purposes, not dictated by any public principle, but dressing itself falsely and fraudulently in that decent garb. They had retired or seceded from their attendance in Parliament, upon the very grounds which should have chained them faster to their seats; namely, that the government was ruining the interests and trampling upon the liberties of the country; and that the people were not sufficiently alive to the situation of their affairs. If anything could add to the folly as well as impropriety of this measure, it was the incompleteness of the secession; for instead of leaving Parliament, and thus enabling the people to choose more faithful guardians of their interests, those men all retained their seats, kept fast hold of their personal privileges, and preserved the option of returning upon any fitting or temporary occasion, to the places which they left empty but open. The Irish Parliament afforded, upon this occasion, one of the two in-

stances of its superiority to our own, which the whole history of that bad and corrupt assembly presents.* The opposition there, with Mr. Grattan at its head, vacated their seats and remained out of Parliament for some years. Strange that the place where political purity was the most rare—where true patriotism was ever at its lowest ebb—where the whole machinery of corruption, all that men call jobbing and factions, was proverbially hereditary and constitutional—and where it has always been so usual to expect as little correctness of reasoning as consistency and purity of conduct—an example should have been afforded of just and rational conduct, and self-denial, upon the point of jobbing itself, which the patriots of England were neither wise enough nor disinterested enough to follow! This phenomenon, otherwise hard to be explained, is accounted for by the character of the illustrious man whom we have named as leader of the Irish Whigs.

The absence of the regular chiefs of the opposition and their followers from Parliament gave Mr. Tierney a ready opening to distinction upon his entering the House of Commons;—an opening of which far less sagacity and resources than he possessed might have taken advantage. He became at once, and from the necessity of the case, in some sort the leader of opposition. The subject to which he mainly directed himself was the financial department, but without at all confining his exertions to questions of this description. The clearness of his understanding, however, and his business-like habits, gave him a peculiar advantage upon such matters; and he retained his hold over it, and, as it were, an almost exclusive possession of it during the whole of his parliamentary life. It seems strange to look back upon the hands out of which he took this branch of opposition business. Mr. Sheridan was the person to whom he succeeded, and who really may be admitted to have been, in every respect, as moderately qualified for performing it as any one of his

* The other was on the Regency, 1788–9.

great abilities could well be. But it must not be supposed that the secession of the regular party left all finance questions, or all questions of any kind, in the hands of him whom they considered as an officious unwelcome substitute, and affected to look down upon as an indifferent makeshift in the hands of the ministers, ever ready to catch at any semblance of a regular opposing party, for the convenience which it affords in conducting the public business. When the Irish Rebellion, and still more when the Union, and soon after the failure of the Dutch expedition seemed to afford a chance of "doing something," they came down and joined in the debate. To Mr. Tierney was left the wearisome and painful but not unimportant duty of watching daily the proceedings of the government, and of the House in which it now ruled with an absolute sway. Whatever was most irksome and laborious, most thankless and obscure in the drudgery of daily attendance, and the discomfiture of small divisions, fell to his share. It was only when the reward of such toils and vexations appeared in view, upon some great occasion presenting itself for assaulting a minister invincible in Parliament, but defeated with discredit in his schemes, and assailing him with the support of the country as well as of fortune, that Mr. Tierney was quickly nor yet very gently put on one side, to make way for the greater men who had been engaged in any pursuit rather than that of their country's favour, and doing any service but that which they owed to their constituents. With what front they could have offered themselves again to those constituents had a general election befallen them before some change had happened in their policy, it would be difficult to conjecture. But fortunately for them as for the country, the administration of Mr. Addington afforded a fair opportunity, perhaps a pretext, of which they were desirous, for resuming their attendance in Parliament; and no one has ever since, in a tone more audible than a whisper, ventured to mention the experiment of secession, as among the ways and means for bettering the condition of a party. It must, however, be added, that when the

election of 1802 came, the people, by showing an entire forgetfulness of the greatest violation of public duty ever committed by their representatives, and never once mentioning the secession on any one occasion, exhibited an inconstancy and neglect of their own best interests, truly painful to those who deem them not only the object, but the origin of all political power ; and who, moreover, hold it to be impossible that any power bestowed upon men can be well or safely executed without a continuance of wholesome popular control. The comfort which we now have under this unpleasant recollection, is derived from an assurance that such never could be the case in the present times. No man, or class of men, dare now leave their parliamentary post, without at the same time throwing up their delegated trust ; and whoever should attempt to repeat the game of 1797 in our times, would find the doors of Parliament closed against him, should he be rash enough again to seek admission through any place having a real body of electors.

In the times of which we have been speaking, Mr. Tierney was one of those Whigs who, partly through hostility to Mr. Pitt, and partly from a sincere gratitude for the peace abroad, and the mild and constitutional government at home, obtained for the country by Mr. Addington, first supported, and afterwards formally joined that minister, upon his rupture with his patron and predecessor. It was unfortunate that Mr. Tierney should have taken office almost on the eve of his new leader committing as great an error, and as fatal as ever could be imputed to his warlike adversary. Mr. Addington having been joined by Mr. Tierney late in 1802, plunged the country, early in 1803, again into war ; for reasons, which, if they had any force, should have prevented him from making peace the year before ; and even if Napoleon was desirous of breaking the treaty, care was taken by the manner of the quarrel which we fastened upon him, to give him every appearance, in the eyes of the world, of having been reluctantly forced into a renewal of hostilities.

The removal of Mr. Tierney from the opposition to the ministerial benches was not attended with any increase either of his weight in the country, or of his powers in debate. No man certainly had a right to charge him with any violation of party duty; for he had never been connected with the regular Whig opposition, and had been treated upon all occasions with little respect by their leaders. Yet in his opinions he agreed with them; they had always professed the same principles upon those great questions, whether of foreign or domestic policy, which divided public men; and he was now in office with statesmen who only differed from those whom he had always opposed, in the inferiority of their capacity—in having done their patrons' bidding by restoring peace and the constitution, both of which he had suspended—and in refusing to go out and let him in again when that turn was served. There was little ground then for drawing any distinction between the two classes of Pittites; upon principle none; only a personal difference divided them; and to that difference Mr. Tierney was wholly a stranger, until he chose to take a part in it by taking office upon it. But, as has often happened to men who thus place themselves in what our French neighbours term "a false position," his weight in the House was not more remarkably lessened than his gift of debating was impaired. He never seemed to be thoroughly possessed of himself, or to feel at home, after taking his seat on the Treasury Bench, among the Jenkinsons, the Bragges, the Yorkes, the Percevals, and the other supporters of Mr. Addington's somewhat feeble, though certainly very useful, administration. It was drolly said of the latter—in reference to the rather useless acquisition which he appeared to have made—that he resembled the worthy but not very acute lord who bought Punch. Upon more than one occasion, words of a graver character were heard from the great master of sarcasm to convey the same idea. When, in an attempt to defend the naval administration of the government against Mr. Pitt's unmeasured attacks, their new champion, with signal

infelicity, adventured upon some personal jeers* at their assailant's expense, the latter remarked in very good humour, "That he had not found him quite so formidable an antagonist in his novel situation, though he nowise questioned his capacity for ministerial exertions, and should wait until his infant aptitudes had expanded to their destined fulness." The overthrow of the Addington ministry soon restored Mr. Tierney to the ranks of opposition; and his union with the Whigs afterwards became so complete, that he acted for some years after the death of Mr. Whitbread and Mr. Ponsonby as their real leader in the Commons; and during one session was installed formally as their chief.

The instances to which we have just adverted, may truly be said to be the only failures in Mr. Tierney's whole parliamentary career. For he was one of the surest and most equal speakers that ever mingled in debate; and his style of speaking was very enviable in this particular. It seemed so easy and so natural to the man as to be always completely at his command; depending on no happy and almost involuntary flights of fancy, or moods of mind, or any of the other incidents that affect and limit the inspirations of genius;—hardly even upon fire caught from an adversary's speech, or an accident

* If we mention the nature of these attempts, it must be after a very distinct and peremptory protest against being understood to give them as samples of the humour, and indeed wit, in which Mr. Tierney peculiarly excelled—for they were exceptions to it, and were his only failures. He spoke of Mr. Pitt's motion as "smelling of a contract"—and even called him "The Right Hon. Shipwright"—in allusion to his proposal to build men-of-war in the Merchants' Yards. On one occasion he fell by a less illustrious hand, but yet the hand of a wit. When alluding to the difficulties the Foxites and Pittites had of passing over to join each other in attacking the Addington ministry, Mr. Tierney (forgetting at the moment how easily he had himself overcome a like difficulty in joining that ministry) alluded to the puzzle of the Fox and the Goose, and did not clearly expound his idea. Whereupon Mr. Dudley North said:—"It's himself he means—who left the Fox to go over to the Goose, and put the bag of oats in his pocket." His failures are told in three lines; but a volume would not hold the successful efforts of his drollery both in debate and in society.

in the debate, and which is wont to kindle the eloquence of the greater orators. Whoever heard him upon any occasion, had the impression that such he would be upon all; and that whenever he chose it, he could make as good a speech, and of the same kind. Nor was that excellence small, or that description of oratory contemptible. It was very effective at all times; at some times of great force indeed. His power of plain and lucid statement was not easily to be surpassed; and this served him in special stead upon questions of finance and trade, which he so often handled. His reasoning was equally plain and distinct. He was as argumentative a speaker as any one could be who set so little value upon subtilty of all sorts; and who always greatly preferred the shorter roads towards a conclusion, to laboured ratiocination, and quick retorts suggested by the course of the discussion, to anything elaborate or long. In these retorts, whether of allusion, or repartee, or personal attack, his excellence was very great. When occasion required it, he could rise into a strain of effective and striking declamation; and although never attempting any flight of a lofty kind, yet he never once failed to reach whatever he aimed at. His wit, or his humour, or his drollery, it would be very difficult to describe—nor easy to say how it should be classed. Perhaps, of the three words we have used, in order to be sure of comprehending or hitting it, the second is the most appropriate. He had the great requisities of a powerful debater—quickness in taking his ground and boldness in holding it; and could instantly perceive an enemy's weakness and his own course to take advantage of it. But we now speak of him when on his legs; for the defect in his character, of which we before made mention, followed him into the House of Commons, and he was wanting in decision and vigour there also, until he rose, when a new man seemed to stand before you.

It remains to be said, that no man's private character stood higher in all respects; and, beside the most amiable domestic affections, he showed a very touching patience,

and even cheerfulness, in sustaining the distressing attacks of the illness under which he laboured for many of the latter years of his life. He was of strictly religious habits, although without anything of either austerity or fanaticism; and is said to have left some devotional compositions, which prove how deeply impressed his mind was by the feelings connected with the most important of all subjects. It must not be forgotten, in speaking of Mr. Tierney's adherence to the liberal party, during their long and all but hopeless exclusion from office, that he was neither sustained in his independent and honest course by any enthusiasm or fervour of character, nor placed in circumstances which made the emoluments of place indifferent to the comforts of his life. A person of his very moderate fortune, and plain, practical, even somewhat cold habits of thinking, upon questions which warm so many minds into the glow of romantic patriotism, has double merit in perseveringly discharging his public duties, and turning a deaf ear to all the allurements of power.



LORD ST. VINCENT.—LORD NELSON.

As it is difficult to find a more correct representation of the Addington ministry than the noble person of whom we have recently been speaking,* so the popularity of that government was, like his, very much owing to the moderation of both its talents and its principles. After the somewhat violent and overbearing, as well as warlike and arbitrary administration of Mr. Pitt, they who both made peace with France, composed the internal dissensions of the country, and restored its free constitution, presented at the same time to its confidence only second-rate genius in every department save two—a genius diluted and lowered to the moderate standard which suits the public taste. These two exceptions were the law and the navy. Of Lord Eldon we have already spoken; the present sketches would be imperfect if Lord St. Vincent were passed over in silence; for he was almost as distinguished among the statesmen as the warriors of his age.

This great captain, indeed, presented a union as rare as it was admirable, of the brightest qualities which can adorn both civil and military life. He early distinguished himself in the naval profession; and was associated with Wolfe in those operations against Quebec, which crowned our arms with imperishable glory, and loaded our policy with a burden not yet shaken off, though, as Lord St. Vincent early foresaw, becoming every day more difficult to bear. An action which he soon after fought with the *Fuodroyant* line-of-battle ship, was the most extraordinary display of both valour and skill witnessed in that war, so fertile in great exploits; and it at once raised his renown to the highest pitch. The peace then

* Lord Liverpool.

came; and it was succeeded by a war, the only one in which the fleets of England reaped no laurels; until just before its close the bravery and seamanship of Rodney retrieved our naval honour. For near twenty years Sir John Jervis was thus unemployed; and in part this neglect must certainly be ascribed to the side in politics which he took—being a Whig of Lord Shelburne's school—highly prized and unreservedly trusted by that able, sagacious, and consistent statesman; than whom none ever entered into the combats of public life with an ampler provision of combined capacity and information, and none ever sustained the useful part which he acted, with more unsullied honour. This tribute to truth and justice is due from Whigs to one whom it suited the policy of 1783 to run down by every species of slander, partly in the prose of pamphlets, partly in the verse of pasquinades, partly in the mixed fiction and prose of speeches—merely because, not belonging to the party, he was audacious enough to act for himself instead of making himself a tool of those who boasted that they never had confided in him, at the moment they were complaining of his deserting their councils.

While Sir John Jervis remained during this long and eventful period on shore, and unemployed in any branch of the public service, he accomplished himself by constant reading, by much reflection, by the intercourse in which he ever delighted with men of learning and talents, as a statesman of profound views, and of penetration hardly equalled by any other man of his time. His natural acuteness no obstacle could impede; his shrewdness was never to be lulled asleep; his sagacity no man ever found at fault; while his provident anticipations of future events seemed often beyond the reach of human penetration. We shall give a remarkable example of this in a matter of deep interest at the present moment. When Lord Shelburne's peace (1783) was signed, and before the terms were made public, he sent for the admiral, and, showing them, asked his opinion. "I like them very well," said he, "but there is a great omission." "In what?" "In leaving Canada as a

British Province.” “How could we possibly give it up?” inquired Lord Shelburne. “How can you hope to keep it?” replied the veteran warrior. “With an English republic just established in the sight of Canada, and with a population of a handful of English settled among a body of hereditary Frenchmen.—It is impossible; and rely on it you only retain a running sore, the source of endless disquiet and expense.” “Would the country bear it? Have you forgotten Wolfe and Quebec?” asked his lordship. “Forgotten Wolfe and Quebec? No; it is because I remember both. I served with Wolfe at Quebec; having lived so long I have had full time for reflection on this matter; and my clear opinion is, that if this fair occasion for giving up Canada is neglected, nothing but difficulty, in either keeping or resigning it, will ever after be known.” We give the substance of this remarkable conversation as we have it from more sources of information than one; and the recollection of the parties is confirmed by the tone of the earl’s letters in 1813, which we have seen. There was then no question of a surrender; but he plainly shows the greatest distrust of our being suffered to retain the colony.

When the war broke out in 1793, Admiral Jervis was soon employed on the Mediterranean and Lisbon stations. What wonders he effected with an inadequate force are well known to the profession. All the world is aware of his glorious victory over the Spanish fleet in February 1797, when he defeated an enemy of nearly three times his force. Nor is there anyone who has not heard of the steady determination of purpose, so characteristic of the man, by which his fleet was made ready to sail from the Tagus in as many hours as all but himself said days would be required for the preparation, after overland advices had arrived at Lisbon of the enemy having put to sea. But the consummate vigour and wisdom of his proceedings during the dreadful period of the mutiny are no less a theme of wonder and of praise. It was the practice to despatch mutinous vessels to serve under his orders, and he soon, by his masterly operations of

combined mercy and justice, reduced them to order, restoring discipline by such examples as should be most striking, without being more numerous than absolute necessity required. The humane ingenuity of his contrivance, to make one execution produce the effect of many, by ordering it on an unusual day (Sunday morning) is well known. His prompt measures of needful, and no more than the needful severity, were as effectual to quell a formidable mutiny which broke out in the fleet that had just returned from foreign service, and was suddenly ordered to the West Indies to watch the French expedition there. The revolt was at once subdued; the fleet set sail; and there never again was heard the whisper of discontent respecting the painful disappointment to which the men were thus subjected.

When the Addington ministry was formed, he was placed at the head of the Admiralty; and now shone forth in all its lustre that great capacity for affairs with which he was endued by nature, and which ample experience of men, habits of command, and an extended life of deep reflection had matured. He laid the foundation of a system of economical administration which has since been extended from the navy to all the departments of the state. But it was bottomed on a searching scrutiny into the abuses of the existing system. The celebrated "Commission of Naval Inquiry" was his own work, and it both led to numberless discoveries of abuse and extravagance, and gave the example to all the similar inquiries which soon after followed. It did more: it introduced the whole subject of economical reform, and made it become, both in and out of Parliament, the principal object for many years of all our patriotic statesmen;—an object which alone they carried through in spite of those ministerial majorities, omnipotent upon every other controversy among the parties in Parliament. It is impossible to calculate what would have been the saving effected to the revenues of this country had Lord St. Vincent presided over any great department of national affairs from the beginning of the war, instead of coming to our assistance after its close. But in pro-

portion to his services in this line of reformation, was the clamour which his operations excited against him. His unsparing rigour, his inflexible justice, his fixed determination to expose delinquents how high soever—to dispense with useless services, how many hands soever might be flung out of the superfluous and costly employment—raised against this great and honest statesman a host of enemies, numerous in exact proportion to the magnitude of the objects he had in view, and exasperated in proportion to the unjust gains of which he was depriving them; in other words, the hostility to which he was exposed was in an exact proportion to its merits. Nor did the gratitude of the country, whom his courage and disinterestedness was thus serving so essentially, at all keep pace with the great benefits which he bestowed. The spirit of party interposed with its baleful influence; and when the Pitt and the Fox parties combined to forget their animosities, for the purpose of unseating Mr. Addington, the ground chosen by the new allies upon which to celebrate their union, and to commence their joint operations, was an attack upon the naval administration of the only great man whom the ministers could boast of having among their number;—the illustrious warrior who, after defeating the enemies of his country by his arms, had waged a yet more successful war against her internal foes by his vigour as a reformer, his irreconcilable enmity to all abuses, and his resistless energy in putting them down.

It is hardly necessary to add, that of eloquence, or debating power, Lord St. Vincent had nothing whatever; nor to such accomplishments did he lay any claim. Indeed he held the arts of rhetoric in supreme contempt; always contenting himself with delivering his own opinion when required, in the plainest language—and often expressing what he felt in sufficiently unceremonious terms. Not that he had anything at all of the roughness often found in the members of the naval profession. On the contrary, his manners were those of a highly polished gentleman; and no man had more of the finished courtier in all his outward appearance and demeanor. His ex-

treme courtesy, his admirable address in managing men, the delicacy with which he could convey his pleasure to inferiors, or his dissent to equals, or his remonstrance to superiors, being the external covering of as firm a determination as ever guided a human being, were truly remarkable ; and gained for him with persons of superficial observation, or imperfectly acquainted with his character, the reputation of being cunning and insincere ; when, in truth, it only arose from a good-natured desire of giving as little needless uneasiness as possible, and raising as few difficulties as he could upon matters foreign to his main purpose. When he went to the Tagus at the head of the expedition and the commission in 1806, the object being, in case Portugal proved indefensible against the threatened French invasion, to make the royal family and principal nobility transfer the seat of government to the Brazils, the proceedings of this chief, in his twofold capacity of captain and statesman, were justly remarked for the great talents and address which they exhibited. He began by cutting off all communication between his fleet and the land ; this he effected by proclaiming an eight days' quarantine. His colleagues in the Commission having joined him, he still prevented his officers and men from landing, but threw open all his ships to the natives of the place, whose multitudes never ceased pouring through those gallant vessels, lost in admiration of their beauty, their resistless force, and the perfect discipline of their crews. With the Court his intercourse now began ; and the terror of his name, even without his armament, would there have made him supreme. The reluctance to remove was, of course, universal and deep-rooted ; nor could any arrangement the expected invader might offer prove less palatable than expatriation and banishment for life across the Atlantic to pampered voluptuaries, the extent of whose excursions had hitherto been the distance between the town and the country palace. But he arranged everything for their voyage ; and he was quite ready to compel their embarkation. His plan would have exposed his own person to some danger, but would

have required no application of military force, if nothing was attempted against the fleet. It seemed to have been borrowed from the celebrated seizure, by Cortez, of the Emperor Montezuma's person, in his capital of Mexico; and the very few to whom he communicated it, while struck with the boldness of the design, saw that it was as happy as it was bold, and had no doubt whatever of its perfect success.

Although we have noticed his contempt for the artifices of oratory, it is remarkable that some of his most intimate friends were those who chiefly owed their renown to its practice. Among these was Lord Erskine; and he enjoyed the friendship of Mr. Fox and Lord Grey. But he made a great difference between the eloquence of the senate and the bar—a difference not perhaps marked by his accustomed sagacity and liberal views, yet sufficiently easy to account for. Parliamentary speaking he regarded as mere “talk.” He saw the noblest exertions of the orator, and also the speeches of longest duration (a circumstance much fitted to rouse his impatience) end, as he phrased it, in wind. The decision came, which he reckoned the result of the battle, and he could trace no connection between that and the preceding debate. Hence, he deemed the whole “nonsense,” “a farce,” “a child's play;” without reflecting that in the long run discussion produces, directly or indirectly, its effect, as he probably would have done had he viewed the scene from what he would call “a safe distance;”—that is, so far off as not to have his early hours interfered with, and his patience assailed by length of speech. The trial of causes he viewed with other eyes. *That* he considered as business—as acting and not talking; and, having the highest admiration for the skill of an advocate, there was no society in which he delighted so much as that of the bar. To hear his acute and even profound remarks upon the conduct of a cause, and the play of adverse counsel, every point of which, to the most minute and technical, he clearly comprehended and highly relished, was one of the things that impressed the listener with the greatest opinion of his extraordi-

nary capacity. He viewed it as a fine operation of attack and defence; and he often said that there was nothing which he ever more regretted than not having been able to attend the proceedings in the Queen's case.

In recounting the triumphs of his military genius, we have not adverted to the extraordinary promptitude, and powers of combination which he displayed, when he equipped the finest expedition that ever was detached from a fleet, and sent it under Nelson up the Mediterranean. This illustrious hero always acknowledged, with the most affectionate gratitude, how much his victory of the Nile was owing to this grand operation of his chief, for whom he felt and ever testified the most profound veneration. Nor was anything ever more disgusting to his truly noble and generous nature, than the attempts of that tribe, the worst kind of enemies, (*pessimum inimicorum genus, laudatores*,)—the mean parasites who would pay their court to himself by overrating his services at St. Vincent in 1797, and ascribing to him the glory of that memorable day. Their affection became thus grounded upon thorough knowledge of each other's merits, and the admiration which these commanded was mutual; nor did the survivor once omit an opportunity of testifying the love he bore his illustrious friend, and his grief for the blow which took him from his country. On board his flag-ship, on all those great occasions when he entertained his numerous followers, Nelson's *Dirge* was solemnly performed while they yet surrounded the table; and it was not difficult to perceive that the great warrior's usual contempt for displays of feeling here forsook him, and yielded to the impulse of nature and of friendship.

So little effect on exalted spirits have the grovelling arts of little souls! He knew all the while, how attempts had been made by Lord Nelson's flatterers to set him up as the true hero of the Fourteenth of February; but never for an instant did the feelings towards Nelson cross his mind, by which inferior natures would have been swayed. In spite of all these invidious arts, he magnanimously sent him to Aboukir;

and, by unparalleled exertions, which Jervis alone could make, armed him with the means of eclipsing his own fame. The mind of the historian, weary with recounting the deeds of human baseness, and mortified with contemplating the frailty of illustrious men, gathers a soothing refreshment from such scenes as these; where kindred genius, exciting only mutual admiration and honest rivalry, gives birth to no feeling of jealousy or envy, and the character which stamps real greatness is found in the genuine value and native splendour of the mass, as well as in the outward beauty of the die; the highest talents sustained by the purest virtue; the capacity of the statesman, and the valour of the hero, outshone by the magnanimous heart, which beats only to the measures of generosity and of justice.

Nor let it be deemed any abatement of this praise if the undeniable truth be stated, that no two men in the same professional career, and both of consummate excellence, ever offered more points of marked diversity in all the particulars which distinguish character and signalise the kinds of human genius. Alike in courage, except that the valour of the one was more buoyant, more constitutional—of the other, more the steady result of reflection, and the produce of many great qualities combined, than the mere mode of temperament;—alike without any difference whatever in that for higher quality, moral courage, and political, which is the highest pitch of it; alike in perfect nautical skill, the result of talents matured by ample experience, and of the sound judgment which never disdains the most trifling details, but hold nothing trivial connected with an important subject;—yet, even in their professional abilities, these great captains differed: for the more stern mind of the one made him a severe disciplinarian, while the amiable nature of the other seduced him into an habitual relaxation of rules whose rigorous enforcement galled, if it did not wound, his kindlier feelings. Not that either Jervis stooped to the fopperies by which some little minds render the service entrusted to their hands as ridiculous as them-

selves ; or that Nelson failed to exact strict compliance with rules, wherever their infraction would be manifestly hurtful : but the habits of the two men upon ordinary occasions were opposite, and might be plainly seen by an inspection of the ships that bore their flags. So, too, Nelson was unequal to the far-seeing preparation and unshaken steadfastness of purpose required to sustain a long-continued operation ; and would, therefore, ill have borne the monotony of a blockade, such as that which kept Collingwood for years on ship-board, or that which Jervis maintained off Brest with the channel fleet. It is also undeniable, that, although nothing could exceed the beauty and perfect fitness of his dispositions for action when the whole operations were reduced to their ultimate point, yet he could not, like Jervis, have formed the plan of a naval campaign ; or combined all the operations over a large range of coast and sea, making each part support the other, while all conduced to the main purpose. Thus, too, it may be doubted if St. Vincent would have displayed that sudden, almost intuitive promptitude of decision, the result more of an ardent soul than a penetrating sagacity, which led Nelson to his marvellous course from the old world to the new in 1805 ; when he in an instant discovered that the French fleet had sailed to the West Indies, and having crossed the Atlantic in chase of them, again discovered that they had returned ; and appeared in Europe almost as soon as the enemy arrived, whom the mere terror of his tremendous name had driven before him from hemisphere to hemisphere. That the movements of his illustrious master would have been as rapid, and his decision as prompt, had the conjecture impressed itself on his mind with the same force, none can doubt ; and it may be further admitted, that such a peremptory will as the latter showed—such a fixed resolution to be obeyed,—such an obdurate, inflexible, unteachable ignorance of the word “ impossible,” when any preparation was to be made—formed no part of Nelson’s character ; although he showed his master’s profound and crass ignorance of that word—the

mother tongue of little souls—when any mighty feat was to be done, such as souls like these cannot rise to comprehend. He who fought the great fight with the *Foudroyant*, would have engaged his Spanish first-rates, had his flag off St. Vincent floated like Nelson's over a seventy-four; but Nelson could not have put to sea in time for intercepting the Spanish fleet, any more than he could have cured or quelled the mutinous contagion which infected and distracted Jervis's crews on the eve of the action.

If, even in a military view, these great warriors thus differed, in all other respects they are rather to be contrasted than compared. While it was hard to tell whether Jervis excelled most in or out of his profession, Nelson was nothing on shore—nay, had weaknesses, which made the sea air as necessary, if not to his mental condition, at least to his renown, as it is to the bodily health of some invalids. The great mind of the one was the natural ally of pride; the simpler nature of the other became an easy prey to vanity. The latter felt so acutely the delight of being loved and admired by all—for to all he was kind himself—that he could not either indulge in it with moderation, or conceal it from the world. Severely great, retiring within himself, occupied with his own reflections, the former disregarded the opinion of those whom he felt destined to command; and only descended to gain men's favour that he might avail himself of their co-operation, which he swiftly converted into service. While Nelson thought aloud, Jervis's words were little apt to betray the feelings that ruled, or the meditations that occupied his mind. The one was great only in action; the other combined in a rare, perhaps an unexampled manner, all the noble qualities which make counsel vigorous and comprehensive, with those which render execution prompt and sure. In the different temper of the men's minds, you could easily tell that the one would be generally popular, from the devotion which the multitude always pay to brilliant valour, and the affection which a gentle, kind, and innocent nature is calculated to win; while the other with courage as

undaunted, though eclipsed by greater and rarer qualities, stood too far removed from the weaknesses of ordinary men to appear in such an amiable light; and by the extent of his capacity and his habits of command, secured the respectful submission of others more than he won their love. Yet, while of Nelson it was justly said that no serious breach of discipline was ever overlooked by him; of Jervis it was as truly observed, that all good officers—all men employed under him, whether in civil or military service—spoke of him as they felt, with admiration of his genius, approaching to enthusiasm; although the followers of his illustrious friend adored their idol with yet more fervent devotion. In his political opinions, this great commander was liberal and free, ever preferring the humane and enlightened side; and though loyally attached to the constitution of his country, yet careless what offence he might give to existing rulers by the unrestrained openness of his sentiments upon public affairs. Accordingly, he was even less a favourite with George III. and his court, than his great master, whose party was always opposed to that narrow-minded and bigoted prince.

It is truly painful to fling in that shade, without which this comparative sketch would lose all likeness to its original. The conduct of Lord St. Vincent was always high and decorous; and although he had a singular aversion to cant of any kind, nor to any more than that of an overdone and pharisaical morality, he never lowered, in his own person, the standard of private any more than of public virtue; wisely holding all conspicuous men as trustees for the character of the people, and in some sort representatives of the people's virtues. Lord Nelson, in an unhappy moment, suffered himself to fall into the snares laid for his honour by regal craft, and baited with fascinating female charms. But for this, he might have defied all the malice of his enemies, whether at sea or on shore, in the navy or at the court; because nothing is more true than that great merit is safe from all enemies save one—safe and secure, so its possessor will only not join its foes. Unhappily, he formed

this inauspicious junction, and the alliance was fatal to his fame. Seduced by the profligate arts of one woman, and the perilous fascinations of another, he lent himself to a proceeding deformed by the blackest colours of treachery and of murder. A temporary aberration of mind can explain though not excuse this dismal period of his history.

The sacred interests of truth and of virtue forbid us to leave the veil over these afflicting scenes undrawn. But, having once lifted it up, on seeing that it lays bare the failings of Nelson, we may be suffered to let it drop over a picture far too sad to dwell upon, even for a moment.

MR. HORNER.—LORD KING.—MR.
RICARDO.

THE history of George III.'s long and eventful reign presents to us no one domestic event so important in its consequences, both immediate and remote, as the rash and hazardous tampering with the currency, first by Mr. Pitt, under the pressure of the pecuniary embarrassments which his wars had occasioned, and next by the Liverpool ministry and the Whigs in their determination to restore the standard suddenly and without compromise.

In 1797 the Bank of England was found to labour under extreme difficulties, from the export of bullion, the state of trade generally, and the financial demands of a government which was borrowing millions yearly to fill the devouring gulf of war expenditure, and to subsidize half the continental powers. It was perceived that either the War or the Bank must stop, and the latter alternative was at once chosen. An order in council was issued to prohibit it from paying in specie; an act was issued to sanction this order, and enable country banks to pay in Bank of England paper; and the slaves of the government, through the press and in Parliament, contended for five long years that this stoppage had no tendency to depreciate bank notes, and had no tendency to increase their issue! That the over-issue, and consequently the depreciation, was for some years extremely inconsiderable, is certain; but these talkers, reasoners

they cannot be termed, denied even the tendency of the suspension to cause either over-issue or depreciation, and affirmed that both were wholly impossible.

In 1803, Lord King, caring little now for the argument of tendency, demonstrated, by the plainest evidence of facts, that the depreciation had actually taken place; indeed the market price of gold having risen above its current price, distinctly proved it; and the only wonder is that Mr. Thornton and Mr. Horner should not, in discussing the subject the year before, have come to the same conclusion.

It was not in the nature of this depreciation to stop, while its cause continued to operate. Mr. Pitt and his supporters, of course, denied it. He who had refused to believe in the existence of the army assembled at Dijon in 1800, and charged with disaffection a respectable mercantile man for writing to his London correspondent that this force was about to cross the Alps, and who never would listen to any account of it until it had destroyed the power of Austria at Marengo, might well be expected to shut his eyes against all the facts from Change-alley, and all the arguments of Lord King, to show that he had intruded into the country a debased currency, when he banished all gold from its circulation. But the transactors of traffic all over the world were as deaf to the charmer of the senate, as he was blind to the facts before his eyes; and the bank-note soon fell to the price of 17s. and 18s. for a pound. Lord Grenville, to his great honour, was the first among the authors of the mischievous policy of 1797 to perceive its consequences, and through the rest of his life he was the man who most deeply regretted it.

In 1811 this evil had gone on to such a length, that the market price of gold rose from the mint price of 3*l.* 17*s.* 10½*d.* to as high as 5*l.* 8*s.*, and at one moment it even reached 5*l.* 11*s.*, amounting to 42 per cent. of rise, and corresponding to an equal depreciation; so that the pound-note was about this time sunk to about 14*s.* value in specie. Accordingly, a regular traffic was

carried on in this article; guineas and silver were bought and sold at this premium, and bank-notes were taken at this discount.

This was the time chosen by the House of Commons for voting, by a great majority, a resolution that the bank-note was worth twenty shillings, or that a guinea in gold was worth a pound-note and a shilling, and, with admirable consistency, to pass a law making it a misdemeanor to give more or less! There was but one farther step for such a body to take, and that was to declare, that two and two are equal to six, and to imprison any one who reckoned differently.

In spite of this gross and revolting absurdity, without any parallel in the history of deliberative bodies, and only to be matched in the annals of pampered despots mad with the enjoyment of power, the depreciation continued; the gold was wholly excluded from circulation; all that the mint coined was instantly exported; neither debtors nor creditors knew how to reckon, and no man could tell the value of his property. In truth, the havoc which the depreciation had made with all the dealings of men was incalculable. Those who had lent their money when the currency was at par, were compelled to receive the depreciated money in payment, and thus to lose 30 or 40 per cent. of their capital. Those who had let land or houses on a lease, must take so much less rent than they had stipulated to receive. Above all, those who had lent their money to the country were obliged to take two-thirds only of the interest for which they had bargained, and were liable to be paid off with two-thirds of the principal. Any considerable fluctuation in the money circulation ever produces habits of gambling and extravagance; and all the mercantile transactions of the community, as well as all its private concerns, assumed this complexion, to which the wicked and absurd policy of the orders in council, another consequence of the war, greatly contributed, by destroying the regular and respectable mercantile dealings of the country, and introducing a clandestine, contraband system, with the avowed

intention of defeating the enemy's decrees against our trade, but also in order to mitigate underhand the pressure of our own retaliating measures.

At length the attention of Parliament, chiefly through the press, was awakened to the state of our affairs. The labours of the bullion committee under Mr. Horner, aided by Mr. Thornton and Sir H. Parnell, had opened all men's eyes to the fact of the depreciation. It was in vain that the incredible resolution of the same year, and, shameful to relate, passed three months after the debate in which Mr. Canning's inimitable speech had demonstrated the whole propositions of the subject, was cited against the over-issue, and its inevitable consequences. The government at length saw that something must be done to stop the depreciation of the Bank paper, and to restore the standard; and the only argument for delay was the necessity of continuing the war expenditure—one of the most urgent reasons, certainly, for instantly applying a remedy to the enormous evil.

At length the government of Lord Liverpool, under the influence of Mr. Peel, who was one of its most powerful supporters though not then in office, undertook the settlement of the question; and a committee was appointed, which, after a full investigation of the subject, reported in favour of an unqualified resumption of cash payments. Mr. Ricardo, not yet a member of Parliament, but who had contributed more than any one, except Lord King and Mr. Horner, to the establishment of the depreciation, by his able writings upon the question, had a great influence upon the decision of the committee and the plan adopted by it for restoring the standard. Mr. Peel being chairman of the committee brought in the bill, which was warmly supported by the Whigs, they claiming a kind of peculiar property in the question, from the support which they had always given to Lord King and Mr. Horner.

The sudden return to specie had of course this inevitable consequence, that all debts contracted during the depreciation in the depreciated currency were now

payable in good money at par, so that if any one had borrowed a thousand pounds during the last ten years, he had now to pay thirteen hundred. And so of all time bargains: tenants had their rents raised in the same proportion, and the country became liable to pay one hundred pounds for every seventy which it had borrowed. The effect produced upon all prices was equally considerable, but was not so pernicious to the country. The case of landowners was, on the whole, the hardest. They had laid out money in purchases, or in improvements, and had generally borrowed a large portion of the sums thus expended. All prices were now reduced, and they were liable to pay their creditors twenty shillings for every fourteen that they had borrowed. The result was, that a considerable body of these unfortunate men were now left without enough to pay their creditors, and some of the class had even lost their whole income. It is fit to consider these things when so great a dissatisfaction is felt with their opposition to a repeal of the Corn Laws.

There are very many reflecting persons who now deeply lament the course which the government and the opposition combined together to pursue in 1819. The argument, that prices were only affected in proportion to the difference between the market and the mint prices of gold at the period of greatest depreciation, seemed satisfactory, because those prices having risen in a greater proportion than the difference during the depreciation, it seemed reasonable to expect that this difference would not be the measure of the fall which the resumption of cash payments might occasion. However, one thing was certain, that no regard was shown in the great and sudden, and somewhat violent, measure of 1819, to the case of all borrowers during the depreciation, including the state itself, and that it was anything rather than a proof of relief being extended, or evidence of justice being done to the borrowers between 1810 and 1820, that the lenders between 1790 and 1800, who had been paid off between 1810 and 1820, had been

severe sufferers by the depreciation of the currency they were paid in. If the two bodies of borrowers and lenders had continued the same all along, the argument would have been unanswerable. In the actual case it was a gross absurdity; for it was assuming that one man might be fairly obliged to pay twenty shillings for every fourteen he had borrowed, because another man had been paid only fourteen shillings for every twenty he had lent.

Any account of George III.'s reign would be most imperfect which did not dwell upon this important part of it; and in order to complete the view of those statesmen who directed the public affairs during the same period, it is necessary that the eminent individuals should be commemorated, who, having borne the principal share in the controversy respecting the depreciation, may be considered as the guides of the sounder policy which led to a restored currency, although the manner of effecting the restoration is liable to much and just observation.

Mr. Horner having entered public life without any advantage of rank or fortune, though of a respectable family, had, in a very short time, raised himself to a high place among the members of the Whig party, (to which he was attached alike from sincere conviction, and from private friendship with its chiefs,) by the effect of a most honourable and virtuous character in private life, a steady adherence to moderate opinions in politics, talents of a high order, and information at once accurate and extensive upon all subjects connected with state affairs. Not that his studies had been confined to these; for his education, chiefly at Edinburgh, had been most liberal, and had put him in possession of far more knowledge upon the subjects of general philosophy, than falls to the lot of most English statesmen. All the departments of moral science he had cultivated in an especial manner; and he was well grounded in the exacter sciences, although he had not pursued these with the same assiduity, or to any considerable extent. The profes-

sion of the law, which he followed, rather disciplined his mind than distracted it from the more attractive and elegant pursuits of literary leisure; and his taste, the guide and control of eloquence, was manly and chaste, erring on the safer side of fastidiousness. Accordingly, when he joined his party in Parliament, his oratory was of a kind which never failed to produce a great effect, and he only did not reach the highest place among debaters, because he was cut off prematurely, while steadily advancing upon the former successes of his career. For although in the House of Commons he had never given the reins to his imagination, and had rather confined himself to powerful argument and luminous statement than indulged in declamation, they who knew him, and had heard him in other debates, were aware of his powers as a declaimer, and expected the day which should see him shining also in the more ornamental parts of oratory.

The great question of the currency had been thoroughly studied by him at an early period of life, when the writings of Mr. Henry Thornton and Lord King first opened men's eyes to the depreciation which Mr. Pitt's ill-starred policy had occasioned. With the former he had partaken of the doubts by which his work left the question overcast in 1802; the admirable and indeed decisive demonstration of the latter in the next year, entirely removed those doubts; and Mr. Horner, following up the able paper upon the subject, which he had contributed to the *Edinburgh Review* at its first appearance, with a second upon Lord King's work, avowed his conversion, and joined most powerfully with those who asserted that the currency had been depreciated, and the metallic money displaced by the inconvertible bank paper. In 1810 he moved for that famous bullion committee, whose labours left no doubt upon the matter in the minds of any rational person endowed with even a tolerable clearness of understanding: and the two speeches which he made, upon moving his resolutions the year after, may justly be regarded as finished models of eloquence applied to such subjects. The fame which

they acquired for him was great, solid, lasting; and though they might be surpassed, they were certainly not eclipsed, by the wonderful resources of close argument, profound knowledge, and brilliant oratory, which Mr. Canning brought to bear upon the question, and of which no one more constantly than Mr. Horner acknowledged the transcendent merits.

When the subject of the holy alliance was brought forward by Mr. Brougham, early in the session of 1816, Mr. Horner, who had greatly distinguished himself on all the questions connected with what the ministers pleasantly called "the final settlement of Europe," during the absence of the former from Parliament, was now found honestly standing by his friend, and almost alone of the regular Whig party declaring his belief in the deep-laid conspiracy, which the hypocritical phrases and specious pretences of the allies were spread out to cover. The part he took upon the debate to which the treaties gave rise, showed that there was no portion of the famous arrangements made at Vienna, to which he had not sedulously and successfully directed his attention. His speech on that occasion was admitted to be one of the best ever delivered in Parliament; and it was truly refreshing to hear questions of foreign policy, usually discussed with the superficial knowledge, the narrow and confused views to be expected in the productions of ephemeral pens, now treated with a depth of calm reflection, an enlarged perception of complicated relations, and a provident forethought of consequences, only exceeded by the spirit of freedom and justice which animated the whole discourse, and the luminous clearness of statement which made its drift plain to every hearer.

But this able, accomplished, and excellent person was now approaching the term assigned to his useful and honourable course by the mysterious dispensations under which the world is ruled. A complication of extraordinary maladies soon afterwards precluded all further exertion, and first confining his attention to the care of his health, before a year was over from the date

of his last brilliant display, brought him deeply and universally lamented to an untimely grave.*

“Ostendent terris hunc tantum fata, neque ultra
Esse sinent. Nimum vobis Romana propago
Visa potens, Superi, propria hæc si dona fuissent!”

When the new writ was moved, on his decease, for the borough of St. Mawes, which he represented under the liberal and enlightened patronage of the Buckingham family, Lorpeth† gave a striking sketch of his character. Mr. Canning, Sir S. Romilly, Mr. W. Elliott, and others, joined in the conversation, and Mr. H. Lascelles‡ observed, with universal assent, that if the form of the proceeding could have admitted of a question being put upon Mr. Horner's merits, there would not have been heard one dissentient voice.

To Lord King was due the detection and the proof of the effects actually produced by Mr. Pitt's fatal measures, as has already been stated; and the excellent individual who rendered so great a service to his

* It deserves to be noted, as a marvellous instance of that truly learned conjecture by which the skill of Dr. Baillie was distinguished, that after many other physicians had severally given their opinions on the nature of Mr. Horner's hidden complaints, Dr. Baillie at once decided against all those theories; but, when he came to propose his own, avowed the extreme uncertainty in which so obscure and difficult a case had left him. However he said that he guessed it was one or the other of two maladies so rare that he had only seen a case or two of the one, and the other never but in a museum of morbid anatomy. When the body was opened by Vaca and Pisa, where he died, it was found that both those rare diseases existed.

† Now Lord Carlisle.

‡ Now Lord Harewood.

country, was distinguished for qualities of a very high order. To a strong natural understanding, which eminently excelled in clearness of perception and quickness of apprehension, he joined habits of study seldom found in the patrician order, but which, as well as his sound and enlightened principles, might well be expected in one who had the glory of descending from the second of English philosophers; for he was the personal representative of Locke—his grandfather, the Lord Chancellor King, having been the nephew and ward of that illustrious person. Although he had far too little ambition, too little thirst for power or for literary fame, ever to exert his talents in anything like their full extent, he had passed his life in reading, with little other object than to occupy his time agreeably and to improve his mind. His information, therefore, was extensive and accurate; with most parts of historical, philosophical, and theological controversy he was familiarly conversant; and he had gathered from all his studies and all his reflections a firm belief in the title of the people to as large a portion of liberty and of power as they are capable of enjoying with advantage to themselves; a deeply rooted conviction of the sinfulness as well as the folly of intolerance, religious or civil; and an habitual veneration for the pursuit of truth and truth alone, in all inquiries whether practical or speculative. In following this worthy object he was as little to be daunted by perils in action as to be scared by consequences in argument. Difficulties had more influence over him by far than dangers; for though he was of an active turn of mind, and applied himself to his favourite pursuits, whether of agriculture or study, with assiduity; yet as he had no great stimulus from ambition or from vanity, he cared little to struggle with what cost trouble, as long as he could occupy himself as well in easier pursuits. The firmness with which he stood up on all occasions for his principles, the great doctrines of civil and religious liberty, would have done honour to the saints and martyrs of the seventeenth century. The

offence which he gave by his warfare with ecclesiastical establishments never abated his hostility. Superficial men fancied they saw in this course an indication of indifference to religion itself; whereas, one of his chief reasons for objecting to a state endowment, was its tendency to undermine religion, as he thought, whether rightly or erroneously, and its liability to be perverted into an engine against the liberties of the country.

With the solid qualities which have been described, he possessed others of a lighter kind, and to the more valuable acquirements of extensive study, he added several of the more trivial but more elegant accomplishments. He had a keen sense of the ludicrous; his taste in composition was pure; his style natural, simple, and clear. Nothing can be more admirably written than his celebrated tract on the currency; of which the philosophy, too, is as excellent as the argument and the inferences are practical. He had an excellent taste in gardening and in architecture, down to its most minute details; nor was there a more perfect draughtsman for the more ornamental parts of rooms, upon the pure models which in Italy he had studied, than the political economist who could unravel all the mysteries of currency and exchanges, the philosopher who could throw light on the darker passages of metaphysical science.

This distinguished person was equally delightful in private and respectable in public life. His gayety was perpetual; natural, lively, playful, no one was more easily interested and amused; few brought more into the stock of entertainment. The difference of ranks was probably less known to him than to any one of the order to which he belonged. Pride of every kind was as alien to his nature as vanity. He seemed unconscious that the chancellor King or the philosopher Locke had ever lived; and equally unconscious of his own existence. It should seem, indeed, that the fact of the Lord Chancellor's existence has been also obliterated from the recollection of his surviving family; for the name and title of King has been abolished, and

some other one wholly unknown substituted in its stead. If this has been done from a noble desire to illustrate an obscure title by great actions, 'tis well. But in the meantime it may be remarked, that government ought to have corrected this apparent want of memory, and peremptorily refused an arrangement by which all traces are expunged from the peerage of one who was an ornament to the order; one who was elevated to his rank for great public services, whose name was the property of his profession and his country.

THE third of the persons who have been mentioned in connection with the currency question, was Mr. Ricardo; a person of good information and great ability, though not overtopping all others in learning, nor entitled to be reckoned a man of genius. The originality of some speculations on political economy, in which he engaged, was, indeed, undeniable; for, although the doctrine of rent now generally received had been broached some years before by Sir Edward West, afterwards Chief Judge at Bombay, he delivered it in an obscure pamphlet, which being published anonymously attracted no attention, and was quite unknown both to Mr. Malthus and Mr. Ricardo at the time their controversy began. This furnishes an additional proof, however, of the truth so universally observed in all departments of science, that discoveries being made gradually, and when many men's minds are bent in the same direction, the new light seldom breaks upon one eye alone, and a doubt may almost always be raised who is the person that really made the step.

The habits of this able and excellent person were those of business, and business of a contracted kind, as little

likely to fit the mind for abstract and general inquiries as to point the notice towards them. His life had been passed on the Stock Exchange, like that of so many members of the Jewish persuasion to which his family originally belonged. But his leisure hours had been devoted to study, and no man was better acquainted with all the ordinary topics of political information. When the bullion question was forced upon the attention of Parliament and the country, by the manifest effects of inconvertible bank-paper having so long been issued by the Bank of England, and still more, perhaps, by the excessive issue of country bank-notes, contrary to all the speculative arguments of the Pitt school, founded upon a fallacious notion that their being made payable in Bank of England paper, imposed an effectual check upon their issue, whereas country people, preferring paper on which names well known to them were seen, never thought of making any such exchange, Mr. Ricardo took a part in the controversy that arose, and published one or two tracts on the depreciation. Lord King had first demonstrated this as early as 1804, the book of Mr. Thornton, and Mr. Horner's able and learned analysis of it in the "Edinburgh Review," having left this important question altogether undecided. But Mr. Ricardo's arguments and his facts, added to his great practical knowledge of all monetary questions, produced a powerful impression, and greatly aided the proceedings of the first bullion committee, that of 1810. As a literary performance the pamphlet had a merit almost equal to that of its argument and its information. The style was simple, clear, and nervous; showing powers, both of reasoning and of explanation, which were of a high order, and disfigured by no deviation whatever from the rules of correct taste.

During the few succeeding years, in the enjoyment of high reputation among political economists, and taking a distinguished place among literary men, he continued his labours as an author, and, consolidating his views in one work, gave to the world his excellent treatise on

his favourite science, which, with Mr. Malthus's Essay on the "Principle of Population," divides the claim to a second place, after the "Wealth of Nations," among the books which this country has produced upon the important science of Economics. Meanwhile his controversial discussions with Mr. Malthus and others were conducted in a spirit of candour and genuine unaffected good-humour, joined to first-rate ability and argumentative skill, that makes them a model for all succeeding combatants in the fields of reasoning. The distinguished men who carried on this discussion in public, through the press, betrayed no heat or impatience of temper—no anxiety to take an unfair advantage—no wish to catch at trifling omissions or slips—nothing of heat or animosity whatever; they were manifestly impressed with one only desire and in pursuit of one object alone—desirous only that the truth should be discovered—the truth, the sole object of their search; and although there was involved in the contest the question of their own fame, it was conducted as calmly as a game at chess or the investigation of a problem in the mathematics.

The bill which usually goes by Mr. Peel's name had been passed for restoring the currency a short time before Mr. Ricardo came into Parliament; but the committee (commonly called the Second Bullion Committee), out of whose Report the measure arose, had fully adopted the principle and had clearly followed the plan laid down by Mr. Ricardo. When he took his place in the House of Commons, after the high reputation which had preceded him, he necessarily appeared to some disadvantage under the weight of the great expectations formed of him. But as far as these were reasonable, however ample, they were fully answered. His speaking, his conduct, his manner, were all unexceptionable, and all suited to the man, his high station among philosophers, his known opinions on political affairs, his kindly nature, and his genuine modesty. There was something about him, chiefly a want of all affectation as well as preten-

sion in everything he said or did, that won the respect of every party. His matter was ever of high value. Whether you agreed or differed with him, you were well pleased to have it brought out and made to bear upon the question, if indeed the pursuit of right and truth was your object. His views were often, indeed, abundantly theoretical, sometimes too refined for his audience, occasionally extravagant from his propensity to follow a right principle into all its consequences, without duly taking into account in practice the condition of things to which he was applying it, as if a mechanician were to construct an engine without taking into consideration the resistance of the air in which it was to work, or the strength and the weight and the friction of the parts of which it was to be made. When he propounded, as the best way of extricating us from our financial embarrassments, that the capital of the country should be taxed 700 or 800 millions, and the debt at once paid off, and defended this scheme upon the twofold ground, that what a debtor owes is always to be deducted from his property and regarded as belonging to his creditors, and that the expense of managing the debt and raising the revenue to pay the interest would be a large saving to the nation, he assumed as true two undeniable facts, but he drew a practical inference not more startling at its first statement than inadmissible when closely examined upon the clearest grounds of both expediency and justice. It may even be doubted whether the only feasible portion of the plan, the diminution of interest from time to time effected by threats of repaying the principal, or rather redeeming the annuities (the only thing to which the public creditor is entitled), be not a step too far in this direction both as to justice and policy. In like manner he always greatly undervalued the amount of the depreciation in the currency upon prices generally, estimating it solely by the difference between the mint price and the market price of gold; and so confidently did he believe in this speculative estimate, that his practical plan for restoring the currency was grounded upon it.

But while such were his errors, and those of a kind to excite very strong feelings in certain large and important classes in the House of Commons, he was uniformly and universally respected for the sterling qualities of his capacity and his character, which were acknowledged by all.

His speaking was of an admirable description ; clear, simple, correct in diction, copious in argument, pregnant with information, but never thrown away. He reserved the share which he took in debate for questions to which his attention had been particularly directed, with which he was familiar, and to which he attached great importance. Hence, even his extreme opinions upon questions connected with the reform of the constitution in church and state gave no offence ; for he appeared not to court the opportunity of delivering them, but as if compelled by a sense of duty to declare his mind, careless, or indisposed otherwise to make a speech. Few men have, accordingly, had more weight in Parliament ; certainly none who, finding but a very small body of his fellow-members to agree with his leading opinions, might be said generally to speak against the sense of his audience, ever commanded a more patient or even favourable hearing ; and, as this was effected without any of the more ordinary powers of oratory or of entertainment possessed by others, it might be regarded as the triumph of reason, intelligence, and integrity over untoward circumstances and alien natures. The regret felt for his loss was in proportion to the high estimation in which he had been held during the three years that he sat in Parliament ; and the country, as well as its representatives, justly sorrowed over a great light extinguished prematurely, which had already proved so useful, and which might have been expected to render so much greater and longer service in illuminating the world.

NOTE.—It may seem an omission in a work professing to give the orators as well as the statesmen of the last age, that Curran should not appear among them—the greatest orator after Grattan and Plunket that Ireland has produced, and in every respect worthy of being placed on a line with the great masters of speech. But there is really an insuperable difficulty in attempting a task which has been so inimitably performed already, and within only a few years. Mr. C. Phillips's sketch of his friend is certainly one of the most extraordinary pieces of biography ever produced. Nothing can be more lively and picturesque than its representation of the famous original. The reader of it can hardly be said not to have personally known Curran and Curran's contemporaries. It has been justly said of this admirable work that it is Boswell *minus* Bozzy. No library should be without such a piece; and instead of hopelessly attempting any addition to it, there will be more use in copying over one of the numerous characteristic descriptions in which it abounds.

“I caught the first glimpse of the little man through the vista of his garden. Thus he was on a third time—afterwards I saw him in a dress which you would imagine he had borrowed from his tipstaff; his hands in his sides; his under-lip protruded; his face almost parallel with the horizon—and the important step, and the eternal attitude only varied by the pause during which his eye glanced from his guest to his watch, and from his watch reproachfully to his dining-room;—it was an invariable peculiarity—one second after four o'clock, and he would not wait for the Viceroy. The moment he perceived me, he took me by the hand, said he would not have any one introduce me; and with a manner which I often thought was *charmed*, at once banished every apprehension, and completely familiarized me at the Priory. I had often seen Curran—often heard him—often read him; but no man ever knew anything about him who did not see him

at his own table, with the few whom he selected. He was a little convivial deity; he soared in every region, and was at home in all—he touched everything, and seemed as if he had created it; he mastered the human heart with the same ease that he did his violin. You wept, and you laughed, and you wondered; and the wonderful creature who made you do all at will, never let it appear that he was more than your equal, and was quite willing, if you chose, to become your auditor. It is said of Swift that his rule was to allow a minute's pause after he had concluded, and then, if no person took up the conversation, to recommence himself. Curran had no conversational rule whatever: he spoke from impulse, and he had the art so to draw you into a participation, that, though you felt an inferiority, it was quite a contented one. Indeed nothing could exceed the urbanity of his demeanor. At the time I spoke of he was turned of sixty, yet he was as playful as a child. The extremes of youth and age were met in him: he had the experience of the one, and the simplicity of the other.”—(Recollections of Curran and some of his Contemporaries, p. 3.)

Let one specimen of Curran's powers be added, and it is one of the most certainly known to be unpremeditated of any in the history of the rhetorical art; for who could ever have supposed a judge capable of sneering at a barrister's poverty by telling him he suspected “his law library was rather contracted?” Yet this was the brutal remark of Judge Robinson, the author of many stupid, slavish, and scurrilous political pamphlets, and by his demerits raised to the eminence which he thus disgraced.

“It is very true, my Lord, that I am poor, and the circumstance has certainly somewhat curtailed my library: my books are not numerous, but they are select, and I hope they have been perused with proper dispositions. I have prepared myself for this high profession rather by the study of a few good works, than by the composition of a great many bad ones. I am not

ashamed of my poverty ; but I should be ashamed of my wealth, could I have stooped to acquire it by servility and corruption. If I rise not to rank, I shall at least be honest ; and should I ever cease to be so, many an example shows me that an ill-gained elevation, by making me the more conspicuous, would only make me the more universally and the more notoriously contemptible."



CHARLES CARROL.

[The following was omitted in its proper place in the First Series.]

WE do a thing of very pernicious tendency if we confine the records of history to the most eminent personages who bear a part in the events which it commemorates. There are often others whose sacrifices are much greater, whose perils are more extreme, and whose services are nearly as valuable as those of the more prominent actors, and who yet have, from chance or by the modesty of a retiring and unpretending nature, never stood forward to fill the foremost places, or occupy the larger spaces in the eye of the world. To forget such men is as inexpedient for the public service as it is unjust towards the individuals. But the error is far greater of those who, in recording the annals of revolution, confine their ideas of public merit to the feats of leaders against established tyranny, or the triumphs of orators in behalf of freedom. Many a man in the ranks has done more by his zeal and his self-devotion than any chief to break the chains of a nation, and among such men Charles Carrol, the last survivor of the patriarchs of the American revolution, is entitled to the first place.

His family was settled in Maryland ever since the reign of James II., and had during that period been possessed of the same ample property, the largest in the Union. It stood, therefore, at the head of the aristocracy of the country; was naturally in alliance with the government; could gain nothing while it risked everything by a change of dynasty; and therefore, according to all the rules and the prejudices and the frailties which are commonly found guiding the conduct of men in a crisis of affairs, Charles Carrol might have been expected

to take part against the revolt, certainly never to join in promoting it. Such, however, was not this patriotic person. He was among the foremost to sign the celebrated Declaration of Independence. All who did so were believed to have devoted themselves and their families to the furies. As he set his hand to the instrument, the whisper ran round the hall of Congress, "There go some millions of property!" And there being many of the same name, when he heard it said, "Nobody will know what Carrol it is," as no one signed more than his name, and one at his elbow addressing him remarked, "You'll get clear—there are several of the name—they will never know which to take." "Not so!" he replied, and instantly added his residence, "of Carrolton."

He was not only a man of firm mind, and steadily-fixed principles; he was also a person of great accomplishments and excellent abilities. Educated in the study of the civil law at one of the French colleges, he had resided long enough in Europe to perfect his learning in all the ordinary branches of knowledge. On his return to America, he sided with the people against the mother country, and was soon known and esteemed as among the ablest writers of the Independent party. The confidence reposed in him soon after was so great, that he was joined with Franklin in the commission of three sent to obtain the concurrence of the Canadians in the revolt. He was a member of Congress for the first two trying years, when that body was only fourteen in number, and might rather be deemed a cabinet council for action than anything like a deliberative senate. He then belonged, during the rest of the war, to the legislature of his native state, Maryland, until 1788, when he was elected one of the United States Senate, and continued for three years to act in this capacity. The rest of his time, until he retired from public life in 1804, was passed as a senator of Maryland. In all these capacities he has left behind him a high reputation for integrity, eloquence, and judgment.

It is usual with Americans to compare the last thirty

years of his life to the Indian summer*—sweet as it is tranquil, and partaking neither of the fierce heats of the earlier, nor the chilling frosts of a later season. His days were both crowned with happiness, and lengthened far beyond the usual period of human existence. He lived to see the people whom he had once known 900,000 in number pass twelve millions; a handful of dependent colonists become a nation of freemen; a dependent settlement assume its place among the first-rate powers of the world; and he had the delight of feeling that to this consummation he had contributed his ample share. As no one had run so large a risk by joining the revolt, so no one had adhered to the standard of freedom more firmly, in all its fortunes, whether waving in triumph or over disaster and defeat. He never had despaired of the commonwealth, nor ever had lent his ear to factious councils; never had shrunk from any sacrifice, nor ever had pressed himself forward to the exclusion of men better fitted to serve the common cause. Thus it happened to him that no man was more universally respected and beloved; none had fewer enemies; and, notwithstanding the ample share in which the gifts of fortune were showered upon his house, no one grudged its prosperity.

It would, however, be a very erroneous view of his merits and of the place which he filled in the eye of his country, which should represent him as only respected for his patriotism and his virtues. He had talents and acquirements which enabled him effectually to help the cause he espoused. His knowledge was various; and his eloquence was of a high order. It was, like his character, mild and pleasing; like his deportment, correct and faultless, flowing smoothly, and executing far more than it seemed to aim at, every one was charmed by it, and many were persuaded. His taste was peculiarly chaste, for he was a scholar of extraordinary accomplishments;

* What we call the Michaelmas summer; the "short summer" of the South of Europe.

and few, if any, of the speakers in the New World came nearer the model of the more refined oratory practised in the parent state. Nature and ease, want of effort, gentleness united with sufficient strength, are noted as its enviable characteristics; and as it thus approached the tone of conversation, so, long after he ceased to appear in public, his private society is represented as displaying much of his rhetorical powers, and has been compared, not unhappily, by a late writer, to the words of Nestor, which fell like vernal snows as he spake to the people. In commotions, whether of the senate or the multitude, such a speaker, by his calmness and firmness joined, might well hope to have the weight, and to exert the control and mediatory authority of him, *pietate gravis et meritis*, who

——regit dictis animos et pectora mulcet.

In 1825, on the anniversary of the half century after the Declaration of Independence was signed, the day was kept over the whole Union as a grand festival, and observed with extraordinary solemnity. As the clock struck the hour when that mighty instrument had been signed, another bell was heard to toll: it was the passing bell of John Adams, one of the two surviving presidents who had signed the declaration. The other was Jefferson; and it was soon after learned that at this same hour he too had expired in a remote quarter of the country.

There now remained only Carrol to survive his fellows; and he had already reached extreme old age; but he lived yet seven years longer, and, in 1832, at the age of 95, the venerable patriarch was gathered to his fathers.*

* His family yet flourishes in America, and three of his granddaughters are allied by marriage to three noble families in England: among them one is now Marchioness Wellesley, the amiable and accomplished consort of that great statesman, whose outset in life was marked by a cordial support of American Independence.

The Congress went into mourning on his account for three months, as they had done for Washington, and for him alone.

The historian of George III.'s reign, who should confine his attention to the statesmen of England, would exhibit but a faint picture of the times, and very imperfectly represent even those who administered the affairs of our own country. The eminent men to whose hands the destinies of France were committed during the eventful period of the revolution, exercised an almost direct influence over the fortunes of every neighbouring nation, and a just view of the course pursued by our statesmen cannot be obtained without considering the French rulers to whom they were opposed, or with whom they negotiated. The order of time, and indeed the relation of events, points first to the name of



NECKAR.

Few men have ever risen from humble, even obscure beginnings, to a station of vast importance, both for wealth and power, for personal aggrandisement and influence over the fate of the world, with so little of genius as Neckar ; and it is a grateful refreshment to the mind of the historian, weary with contemplating successful vice or great resources expended in committing great crimes, to dwell upon one example of more ordinary merits recompensed by all the gifts of fortune, and stern virtue, unsustained by brilliant capacity, conferring upon its possessor supreme power and far-resounding fame.

The clerk in a Paris banking-house, though of a respectable and indeed ancient Genevan family, he became early in life, by the successful pursuit of commerce, one of the richest men in France. The student of letters for his amusement, and without anything like genius in the science or the *belles lettres*, he lived to be the centre of all literary society in the most refined capital of Europe, to which he was a stranger by his birth. The trader first, then the envoy of the smallest state in Europe—a state rather known among other powers as the butt of their gibes than the companion of their councils—he rose to be chief minister of the greatest among them ; and the young adventurer from Geneva, by his errors, or by his patriotism, as men may variously view it, lived to be the proximate cause of that mighty event which shook all Europe to its centre, and exercises to this hour an influence universal and unparalleled over the destinies of the world.

Neckar was sent from his father's house at Geneva to learn business in the banking-house of Vernet : he soon acquired the ascendant where he had been only

clerk; and, becoming afterwards partner in the house of Thelluson, he, at once, by his talents for business, established the splendid fortune of that great firm and became the architect of his own. Retiring at an early age from mercantile pursuits with an ample fortune, he was chosen resident for the republic of Geneva at the court of Versailles, and soon became universally esteemed in the circles of the aristocracy, as he had been in those of commerce, for his amiable manners and his strict integrity. His information was extensive, and it was accurate: he had especially studied finance, and was extremely knowing on all matters connected with it,—a subject of peculiar and universal interest at the time when he came into patrician society. His wealth we may well suppose added greatly to the charms of his society in a luxurious capital like Paris, and was not even without its effect on the courtly circles of Versailles. But his conversation and his manners were calculated to win their way independent of a brilliant fortune; the former—lively, cheerful, elegant, and instructive; the latter—simple, natural, and, if somewhat pedantic, yet honest and manly. Indeed, of that which the great vulgar are so wont to look down upon as pedantry, it may be observed that its title to our respect is not trifling: for it necessarily implies intellectual qualifications in at least one department, and so much honesty and openness of character as will not content, for fashion's sake, to wear a mask. It must be added that our French neighbours have always deemed pedantry and pedantic manners a much lighter offence in the code of social taste than ourselves. In the gayest circles of Paris such a taunt goes but for a little—nay, is often found rather a passport to notice, if not to respect; while the less frivolous English, as they deem themselves, turn from it with aversion, or look down upon it with contempt. This difference, probably, arises from the greater zeal with which the Frenchman throws himself into any pursuit he embarks in, careless of his dignity, and fearless of the ridicule attendant upon those who go to extremes. He

is, generally, therefore, prone to the very courses which are characteristic of the pedant, the man of a single idea, the enthusiast who, absorbed in a single pursuit, forgets that others sympathize little with him. He has, as it were, habitually and naturally the pedantic diathesis, and hence is either insensible to its effects on others, or easily becomes patient of them himself.

But Neckar had consecrated his leisure to pursuits more important than shining in the society of either the mercantile or the aristocratic community. As early as 1773, his "Eloge de Colbert" carried away the prize of the Academy; and when the anxiety respecting the public sustenance was at its height, he distinguished himself still more by his admirable essay on the corn-laws and trade—"La Legislation et le Commerce des Grains." From this period his accession to the management of the French finances was regarded as certain; and in 1777, when their derangement pressed the Government most severely, on the eve of its embarking in the American war, he was clothed with the high office of Director-General.

Nothing could be more wise, nor anything more brilliant, than his first operations. He established order where he found confusion to prevail; where darkness and mystery shrouded each branch of the administration, he let in the wholesome light of day; in every department the inflexible enemy of fraud made strict honesty the basis of all his operations, and rigorously exacted from others the same purity of which he furnished himself so bright an example. He began by refusing the whole salary and emoluments attached to his office. Short-sighted men joined with those whose interests were threatened by this course, in considering it as the fruit of a vain-glorious disposition. It was nothing of the kind: it was the wise and well-considered precaution of arming himself with the power to extirpate all abuses, and reduce all useless payments, and even to press hard upon the subsistence of individuals wherever the public good required the sacrifice. How else could he have suppressed six hundred places about court, and in the treasury,

at one blow—the mighty achievement which signalised his accession to power? But he stopped not there. Some of the most oppressive remnants of the feudal system were abolished; the heaviest of the taxes (the *Taille* or property-tax) was limited and fixed: the most substantial reforms were introduced into the administration of hospitals and prisons; the foundation of yet more extensive improvements was laid in the establishment of provincial assemblies, and a general system of accounting extended to all the branches of the administration, so as to exact a full pecuniary responsibility from each. It must be added as a set-off against the charges which involve this honest minister in the blame of occasioning the revolution ten years later, that all the reforms of his first administration were prudently devised and framed upon a moderate scale, guided by well-considered views, and effected so gradually, that a second step never was taken until the safety and advantages of the first had been submitted to the only sure test, that of actual experience.

In some departments he had found resistance to his reforms, which his firmness, joined to his suavity of manner, and sustained by his unimpeachable integrity, enabled him to overcome. But Sartine, formerly chief of the police, who had been made minister of marine by the prime minister, Maurepas, reckoning on the support of his patron, refused to adopt the system of accounting which formed the corner-stone of Neckar's whole plan; and Neckar prevailed on the king to supersede him, appointing in his room the *Maréchal de Castries*, a man of the highest honour and greatest zeal for the public service. Maurepas never forgave this proceeding. Availing himself of the clamour raised by Neckar's famous "*Compte Rendû*," and by his ordinance for calling together provincial assemblies, so odious to the ancient parliaments, he brought about the vexatious treatment which led to the resignation of the able and honest minister, who in five years had changed a deficit of 35,000,000 of francs into a surplus of 10,000,000, without imposing one single new tax of any kind, and

under all the burdensome war expenses which had been added to the former peace establishment. It must, however, be admitted that although Maurepas worked for this purpose, Neckar was not justified in resigning his office. The refusal of his demand to have the *entrée du conseil* (a seat in the cabinet) was hardly sufficient, if in all other particulars he had the firm support of the court; and, as nothing could exceed the distress into which his resignation plunged the royal family, so no effort was omitted for his restoration. It is generally believed that, had he been in office at the death of Maurepas, then fourscore years old and upwards, he must have succeeded to his place, and that he would certainly have prevented both the financial embarrassments which led to the Revolution, and the assemblage of the States, which, occasioned by the deficit, was its proximate cause.

The courts of Vienna, Naples, and St. Petersburg all besought him in vain to undertake the direction of their affairs as finance minister; but he preferred a literary leisure; and his work on finance, published in 1784, had such success, that 80,000 copies of it were sold in a few days. Calonne, who succeeded him in France, soon threw all into the confusion from which he had extricated the revenue and expenditure of the country; and when Brienne became prime minister, after calling the States-General together, and plunging the finances into still worse confusion than before, he was compelled again to send for Neckar, who came to the assistance of the nation, but came far too late; and he said to himself on consenting again to take office—"Why have they not given me the Archbishop's (Brienne's) fifteen months? But now it is too late." He found the public securities unsaleable in the market, the country threatened with famine, the Parliament in banishment, the Bastille filled with deputies from the provinces, the whole country distracted with factious violence, and an immediate assembling of the States-General distinctly promised. His name at once restored public credit—the

feelings so strongly excited were calmed—the prison doors flew open—the exile of the Parliament was ended—and the progress of famine arrested by the arrival of provisions. But he also found two questions standing ripe for decision; on both his firmness failed; and either was sufficient to stay or to accelerate a revolution. The property-qualification of deputies to the States-General he referred to the notables, whom he most injudiciously reassembled, and who decided against it. The proportion of the Tiers Etat to the nobles and the clergy in the States-General he finally decided should be double of either, or equal to both, and decided, after having at first framed his report against this double proportion, nay, having actually printed that document. A man so wanting in fixed opinions, or so infirm of purpose in pursuing his own views, was wholly unfit to guide the vessel of the state amidst the storms and currents of the revolutionary times. A letter which he wrote on the eve of the States' assembling has been frequently cited and even admired. "*Je vois la grande vague s'avancer; est-ce pour m'engloutir?*" Had he done all in his power to turn it back, or to protect the country from its fury—nay, had he done nothing to increase its volume and to accelerate its advance—this passage might have been deemed worthy of praise. But in him whose vacillation and incapacity had been such as we have just seen, a more silly observation, or one indicating more puerile vanity, can hardly be imagined. It even betrayed a selfish absorption in the contemplation of his own fate, wholly unworthy of the man and very unlike his general character. It looked as if his whole efforts had been bestowed upon endeavours to get himself out of his difficulties—as if his own escape or his own destruction alone occupied his thoughts at the moment of the crisis which his imbecile conduct had brought upon his country.

A conduct beginning with decision may often end in irresolution; but it is rare, indeed, that vacillation, marking the earlier scenes of a great action, should become steadied and give place to manly determina-

tion. In the great question of votes by chambers or by individuals, which immediately brought on, and, indeed, involved, the decisive measure of Abbé Sieyès (one of his three grand strokes of policy*), the union of the three in one chamber, Neckar's irresolution continued as before; and he is understood to have obtained from the King, by next thing to compulsion, his letter of the 25th of June, sanctioning the union of the three orders. But within a fortnight after he was suddenly dismissed, and ordered to leave the kingdom. This was the signal of the revolution, which broke out on the 14th of July, and Neckar's triumphant recall immediately followed the taking of the Bastille.

Now began that series of feeble and inconsistent propositions, yet more feebly and inconsistently supported—of compliances one day with the people, another with the court—of stupefied inaction, alternating with pointless and ill-conducted activity, which composed his second administration, and justly lost him the favour of the people, without for a moment gaining the confidence of the King, or the nobles, or the church. After ten months spent in the outward semblance of power, but without any real authority or even influence whatever, the most degrading position that man can fill, he quietly resigned his office and quitted the country. Nor was contrast more marked ever exhibited in this world than between his former dismissal, which, throwing all France into convulsions, was the immediate occasion of the revolution, and his voluntary retirement less than a year after, which passed as unheeded as the most insignificant event of the day—between his return to power on the shoulders of the people in 1789 and his journey towards the Lake of Geneva in 1790, through the same country, where his

* The other two were the national guard and the departmental division. Certainly it is rarely that so many and such vast projects have been found to proceed from the same quarter; and this accounts for the respect in which M. Talleyrand, and other French statesmen, not generally lavish of their admiration, always held a person, to all who saw him, at least during the last twenty years of his life, apparently much overvalued.

life was in hourly danger from the violence of the same people, among whose execrations he retreated from France.

As regarded his own tastes and feelings this reverse did not greatly affect him ; for, though not void of ambition, and accessible enough to vanity, he had passed the latter portion of his life, particularly the last ten months, in a state which he described to be one of unceasing torture, always in a false position, constantly responsible for proceedings which he could not control, and apprehensive at each step of the most dreadful evils, which soon overtook the country in a measure yet more fatally abundant than his worst fears had foretold. He now, therefore, felt his retirement from public life, and from France, torn by fierce factions, and the theatre of violent convulsions, as a great relief, instead of a deprivation. In his quiet retirement at Coppet, he could enjoy the society of the early friends, whom he loved, and devote himself to those literary pursuits which he had never abandoned. In the bosom of his accomplished family, too, he had resources of learned and social intercourse which are given to few indeed. Of his celebrated daughter, Madame de Staël, the literary fame thus early had spread through Europe; while his wife, beside performing all the duties of her station with exemplary fidelity, was also learned above the standard of ordinary women, and possessed considerable talents. But it was an amiable weakness of Neckar to overrate the capacity of this worthy woman in a degree somewhat ridiculous. She was extremely formal, precise, and pedantic ; she was also (if it be any addition to these qualities) exceedingly tiresome, and her society was all but dull, however well informed. But her admiring husband saw and heard all her performances, whether from the press or in conversation, as master-pieces ; he cultivated her with the observance of a humble votary ; he watched her lips for the lessons of wisdom or the flashes of wit ; and so little had the secret of her dulness, which all else knew, ever reached him, even to the extent of the most remote

suspicion of that unfortunate and undeniable truth that he would communicate to his guests before dinner, with the air of one who announces a pleasure at once exquisite and rare as a treat in store for his company—"Ah, entendez vous, Messieurs; nous allons avoir Madame Neckar à diner aujourd'hui!" Her book upon divorce is ably written, though heavily, and in a style forced, not natural. One chapter contains eloquent passages; and she espoused the side of the question most unpopular at the time, and looked down upon as that of narrow-minded and bigoted persons. There was, indeed, nothing more exemplary than the courage which this respectable person always showed in proclaiming and defending her opinions, religious and moral, in the society of Paris, where they were not only unpopular, but the objects of general ridicule. Her principles were strongly rooted in her mind, and at all times firmly maintained in her conversation, as well as shown forth in her practice.*

This great merit was also that of her husband, who on all occasions, in season and out of season, was ready to preach what he deemed the truth; careless whom it might offend, or to what attacks it might expose him. His strict notions of both public and private morality were little to the taste of the court when he first appeared at Versailles. As little was his republican simplicity relished in the finance minister of the Grand Monarque. Least of all were his principles of economical reform calculated to please any department in the state. But those notions, and habits, and principles were never for an instant lost sight of by this honest man, nor ever moderated to suit the prevailing taste, nor ever disguised under any more pleasing exterior than naturally suited his sentiments and appropriately clothed their character. If an honesty and a courage so rare both in statesmen, in courtiers, and in members of patrician

* This was the Mademoiselle Curchod whom Gibbon describes himself as having fallen in love with while the young lady resided at Lausanne—the daughter of a respectable Swiss pastor.

society, led to the indulgence of a little self-gratulation, or, perhaps, self-admiration, in him who practised it, instead of smiling at him, as was the custom, for being somewhat vain of his virtue, we ought rather to confess not only that so great a merit is more than sufficient to redeem any such little weakness, but that the being conscious of the contrast which he presented to all others was the inevitable consequence of their defects rather than of his frailty.

This courageous honesty was the greatest distinction of Neckar's public character; and this honesty never failed him, though, during his second administration, his firmness yielded to the numerous and almost inextricable difficulties by which he was surrounded. But, while we are left in unavoidable doubt whether any degree of resolution could have saved the state from the dismal scenes which followed his retirement, at least we can have no hesitation in pronouncing that, when he early saw himself performing the part of a sham minister, without any substantial power, he ought at once to have quitted the stage.

But this courageous honesty was by no means his only, though it was his chief, distinction, when compared with most other ministers. He was greatly their superior in point of information, both of general knowledge and of the science peculiarly belonging to politic men. His habits of business, too, were transferred from the counting-house to the bureau, while his Genevan education was not forgotten, hardly suspended, in the drawing-rooms of royalty or of fashion. His liberal opinions upon all subjects of government, as well as of economics, formed certainly a third peculiarity in a minister of "the times before the flood of 1789;" probably in a servant even of popular monarchies. How few have served the limited and constitutional sovereigns of England, at any period of our history, with such a steady regard to the interests of the people, so fixed and so practical a belief that their happiness is the end of all government, so rooted a

determination to protect their rights wherever these could be asserted without danger from their licentiousness! That such a minister, who had played such a part in the earliest crisis of the *revolution*, and all whose sentiments wore a republican hue, should be eminently distasteful to Napoleon, ever since he had abandoned all democratic courses, is little to be wondered at. On his march to Marengo, in 1800, he visited him at Coppet; and the First Consul—no longer that Bonaparte who had once crossed the same Alps to subdue the same Italy under the title of “Member of the National Institute *and* General in Chief”—now thought proper to designate his venerable host as a “college tutor, very heavy and very turgid” (*régent de collège, bien lourd et bien boursoufflé*). It was the love of liberty, however, that he secretly hated, not the love of letters, which he thus caricatured; and if it be said that he had to reproach the popular minister’s former life with much of the violence which broke out in France during his time, justice should have suggested that, as far as intentions were concerned, Neckar uniformly took part against the people on the instant that he found their zeal for liberty degenerating into licentiousness.

Two faults, however, must be admitted to have alternately marked his scheme of conduct in this important particular, and they are perhaps the greatest and attended with the gravest consequences, both to a statesman’s own fame and to the happiness of his country, of any that he can commit. He never made sufficient allowance for the momentum which popular influence acquires, and the fire which popular feelings kindle, when once a great movement is begun; but always seemed to reckon upon having the same power to control excesses after as before the excitement, forgetting that, though his was the same hand which had set the machine in motion, he had no longer to resist and to direct the same force. It was an almost equal error in an opposite direction, that, when he had taken

a certain part, and that violence was found to be the result, he got squeamish about trifles, and resisted at a time when it would have been wisdom to yield; wholly forgetting the line which he had chosen, the inevitable excesses to which it led, and the folly of objecting to what inevitably followed from his own election. Hence with all his integrity, which was untainted—his talents for affairs, which were undeniable—his sway over the public mind, which at one time was unbounded, perhaps unparalleled—he has left behind him the memory of a second-rate statesman, whose good intentions are far more than counterbalanced by his bad judgment, and who, having ventured to pilot the vessel of state in a tempest without the firm hand of a steersman, can neither prevent the shipwreck of his charge nor of his reputation.

In private life Neckar was one of the most amiable of men, beloved by his friends, and in his family adored. His society was sought by those for whom neither his ample fortune nor brilliant station could have any charms; and his literary merits were of a very respectable order. To genius he made no pretensions; and his writings, though clear, argumentative, well informed, are somewhat heavy. But a *jeu d'esprit*, entitled “*Le Bonheur des Sots*,” has been much admired as a lively and ingenious production, the nature of which may easily be guessed from the title; and it is no small glory attending it, that Talleyrand’s answer to it, “*Le Bonheur des Gens d’Esprit*,” was a complete failure, the only one recorded either in his writings or his sayings of that greatest of modern wits. Of his other works, the “*Dernières Vues de Politique et de Finance*” is the best in every respect, though the defence of the celebrated “*Compte Rendû*,” from the accidents of the time, made by far the greatest sensation. But the “*Dernières Vues*” is both a work of great ability and of extraordinary vigour for an author of threescore years and ten; and it has the writer’s usual merit of telling plain truths at a time the least friendly to their reception: for it fore-

tells and unmask the designs of Bonaparte against the liberties of France long before the Consul's resolution to affect absolute power had been either disclosed by himself or discovered by the bulk of his countrymen.

MADAME DE STAËL.

NECKAR is hardly better known in our day, as the Minister of Louis XVI., than as the father and friend of the most celebrated woman in modern times, perhaps in some particulars the most remarkable of her sex that has appeared in any age. If among statesmen her title to a place should be questioned, no one can deny that her writings and her conduct produced an important influence upon the politics of Europe during many years; and, as the potentates in whose hands the destinies of nations were placed, repeatedly acted towards her, some as benefiting by her support, others as injured by her opposition, nay, as she suffered persecution in consequence of her political influence exerted honestly for her principles and her party, it seems at once fair and natural to regard her title as confessed, and to number her among the political characters of the age.

It was, however, as an illustrious member of the republic of letters that she claimed the highest place, and as such that she has the clearest right to the respect of posterity. She was undeniably a woman of genius; and she had this peculiarity among authors of her sex, that, while many have signalised themselves in the lighter walks of literature, and some in the more rugged field of science; while works of fancy have come from some female pens, and mathematical speculations from others; while an Agnesi has filled the professor's chair as an analyst in a celebrated university, a Chastalet has commented on Newton, a D'Acier on Homer, a Somerville (excelling them all) on Laplace—Madame de Staël has written one of the finest romances that ever appeared, one combining entertainment with instruction; has discussed, with all the

rigour of argument and all the powers of eloquence, some of the most difficult questions of politics and of morals; and has profoundly investigated the character and weighed the merits both of the various systems of philosophy, the different bodies of literature, and the diversified schemes of civil polity, which flourish or which fade in the several countries of Europe. Although it would not be correct to say that her varied works are without great faults, still less to affirm that she has left no room for other performances on the same subjects, yet it is certain, and universally admitted, that as yet they stand at the head of the productions which we possess on those several subjects. Her essay on Rousseau's writing; her "Thoughts on Suicide;" her account of Germany; her "Corinne," or Italy described under the attractive form of a romance, all testify to her extraordinary powers, because each is at this hour the best book in its several kind of which we are possessed. Nor does it follow from this admission, that the first of these tracts may not have overrated the merits of Jean Jacques; that much superficial matter is not to be found in the *Allemagne*; or that Italy may not hereafter be more philosophically, it can hardly be more strikingly, painted by another hand. But it must ever be a just subject of admiration to think that, in such difficult and various kinds of composition, a woman should have attained so great excellence, and of astonishment, to reflect that the essays on Rousseau and on Suicide were the productions of a girl, one who had hardly attained the age of womanhood.

It is impossible for him who would truly represent the likeness of this extraordinary person, to separate her moral from her intellectual character, so closely did they touch and so powerfully act on each other. Her warmth of feeling not only stimulated her industry, but it sharpened her perspicacity, whetted her attention, invigorated her reason, and inspired her fancy: because she felt with enthusiasm, she penetrated with sagacity; because her heart beat high with zeal, her imagination glowed

with fervour; the genuine sentiments of a most kind and compassionate nature kindled the warmth of her pathetic eloquence; her inextinguishable hatred of all that is cruel, or oppressive, or false, or mean, overflowed in a torrent of indignation against the tyrant and the impostor. How entirely she was under the dominion of her feelings when excited was known to her friends who dreaded her impoverishment, because they saw that she was without the hardness which nature has bestowed on others as the means of self-defence. How readily she could forget all other things when her heart was touched, was singularly shown on one occasion when she acted a part in a dramatic performance, and, confounding her natural with her assumed character, bounded forward to the actual relief of a family whose distresses were only the theme of a fictitious representation.

The passions are ever eloquent: left to themselves, their natural expression becomes contagious, and carries away the spectator when the actor is manifestly, but vehemently, moved. All that can be wanting in this case is the correct taste which restrains extravagant emotions or unbecoming diction: for it requires but a moderate acquaintance with words and idioms to give vent to the feelings which agitate the soul; and the difference is wonderfully little between the effect produced by the greatest mastery over language in an artist of consummate power, and that which follows the mere ebullition of natural passion in the words of an untutored victim. But Madame de Staël was well read in the best authors; at the fountains of the purest French diction she had drank often and deep; her taste was improved by the converse of highly-gifted men; much practice in writing had made the use of her own language easy to her: the intercourse of society had given her the faculty of extemporaneous speaking; and to the mastery over her own she added a far more familiar acquaintance with foreign tongues than almost any Frenchman ordinarily enjoys. No wonder that with her vehement feelings she became almost immediately one of the most eloquent writers and speakers of the age. Her works bear testi-

mony to this proposition in part; but whoever had only read without hearing her would have formed an imperfect idea of her extraordinary powers.

It must, however, be added, that though the clear expression of her meaning, the flow of her harmonious periods, the absence of monotony, the occasional felicity of illustration, the generally correct statement of an opinion or an argument, the striking and lively and picturesque description, all shine throughout her page, yet we seldom meet with any imagery of peculiar originality or beauty, scarcely ever with any passage of condensed resistless force, and in the diction we are always reminded of the unpassable gulf which separates all foreigners who write in French, even those who, like the Genevans, have no other mother-tongue, from the Scarons, the Voltaires, the Mirabeaus, to whom the purest, most idiomatic, and most racy language was familiar, and in whose writings it had an irresistible charm. It is a singular circumstance that, as Rousseau, who, with all his natural eloquence, wrote in inferior French, has left one work unlike all the rest in this respect, so has Madame de Staël given us a piece, and of a like description, which immeasurably excels her other and more important writings in the beauty of its diction. The "Confessions of Rousseau" as far excels the "Nouvelle Heloise" in the excellence of its French as it falls below that production in the dignity of its subject. But it shows a marvellous power of elevating the lowest, vilest, often the grossest objects of contemplation, by the exquisite diction in which their description is clothed, and it is written in a tongue racy and natural as the best portions of Voltaire. The "Dix Ans d'Exile" of Madame de Staël in like manner, though resembling the "Confessions" in no other particular, is yet far superior to her other works in the purity and genuine Gallicism of the composition. It is the same way that, when Mirabeau, the father, laid aside the pedantries of his sect, and wrote letters on family affairs to his brother, the Bailli, his style became one of the very best and most interesting and most original, instead of nearly the duller and most

formal and least readable in which a Frenchman's thoughts were ever conveyed.

The assertion so frequently made, that Madame de Staël had no wit, is true and it is false. If made absolutely and so as to comprehend all wit, the choice of witty and pointed expressions, the striking combination of ideas, the unexpected illustration of one thing by reference to another—nothing can be more unfounded. Hardly a page of her writings but refutes it at once. But it is quite as certain that it was rather in witty expressions than in witty ideas that she abounded; and it is undeniable that she had little or no sense of the ludicrous, whether in persons or in things—and was thus without any humour or relish of humour, as well as averse to, or incapable of bringing any powers of ridicule to bear upon an adverse argument. Whoever would deny her powers of ready illustration, or of happy repartee, happy both in force and in delicacy, must have known her only through very bad reporters, persons unfair towards her, or incapable of appreciating her. Napoleon having, during the hundred days, sent some one to express the want he felt of her to aid in establishing the constitution, received for answer—“*Il s'est bien passé de constitution et de moi pendant douze ans; et à présent même il ne nous aime guère plus l'une que l'autre.*”—A man of learning and talents, but of sensitive vanity, having made before her a somewhat intemperate sally—“*Avouez donc, monseigneur (said she to a prelate who sat beside her), qu'il n'y a pas de chose si sotté que la vanité ne fasse faire aux gens d'esprit.*”

In a person so full of warm affections, so fond of the natural in character, and so romantic in many of her tastes, it was strange to observe so entire an absence of all love for natural scenery. She was a great lover of poetry; of acting she was passionately fond; in music she took the greatest delight, and even excelled in singing, though she cultivated it but little; but for natural scenery she had no taste; could travel through a romantic country without taking her eye off the page she was reading; and lived on the Lake of Geneva and within view of the Alps, without ever casting a look at

either rugged mountain or blue water. Thoroughly honest, however, and hating affectation in all its forms, she could never pretend to what she did not feel, though at the risk of having a defect in her taste exposed: so, when some one was expatiating with fervour on the pleasure which a tender heart like hers must take among green shades and romantic rivulets, "Ah (she exclaimed), il n'y a pour moi de ruisseau qui vaille celui de la Rue de Bac."

In truth she existed for discussion, for observation of men, for the exciting interest of all national affairs. Society was the element in which she lived and moved and had her being; and the society of Paris was almost alone deemed society in her time. It was here she shone; it was here her influence was felt: it was by her power in this sphere that she could further those principles of liberal but orderly and humane policy to which she was devotedly attached. Her political writings had greatly extended her influence over that important portion of the French nation; and her conversation was singularly calculated to consummate her power. Hereditary in her family, and as well by the mother's as the father's side, was the undaunted spirit which led her to profess her opinions, whatever odium they might draw upon her from the people, whatever contempt from the aristocracy, whatever persecution from the established authorities of the state. When the scaffold was hourly wet with the blood of the royalists, and the Queen was brought to her trial among the rest, Madame de Staël had the courage to publish her defence of the unfortunate Marie Antoinette. When the Consulate was formed, which plainly indicated the approaching supremacy of Napoleon, she openly erected the standard of opposition to the aspiring chief, and made her house the centre of the party which attacked him in the Tribune under the conduct of her intimate friend, Benjamin Constant. Failing in all attempts to gain her over or to silence her, Napoleon soon had recourse to reprisals; and his assumption of arbitrary power was

signalised by her banishment from Paris, the greatest punishment he could inflict upon her. In this hostility to the enemy of liberty and of peace she persevered during the remaining ten years of his reign, although the two millions of the debt owing to her from the government were in consequence never paid until the period of the sudden and unexpected restoration. It would not be easy to name the individual who contributed more towards the conservation of that hatred of Napoleon's dynasty, and that zeal for its subversion, which led to the restoration, at a time when so many even of the Bourbon party had in despair joined the party of their adversaries, and followed the apparently resistless fortune of Napoleon. It is not always that exiled kings are ungrateful on their restoration to the friends of their adversity; and Louis XVIII. repaid to the daughter of Neckar the two millions which he had lent to the state during the disastrous period of his second administration.

That the character of this extraordinary woman had some weaknesses, and that her understanding had some defects, it would be foolish to deny. The former certainly, perhaps also the latter, had their origin in the great warmth of her affections. Her nature was essentially good, kind, loving; and, as her attachments were not slowly formed, so were they not indulged by halves. But if she gave herself up heartily to their influence, they were not the less firm, steady, and enduring. No one was less fickle in her friendships, and no one was less disposed to quit a subject or pursuit which had excited her interest, however suddenly that excitement had been produced. Full of enthusiasm, she was yet constant; prone to vehement feelings, she was without violence either of temper or disposition; ardent in her affections and determined in her enmities; her whole composition contained not a particle of spite, or gall, or revenge. All was noble and generous, to her very faults; nothing mean or paltry belonged to her understanding or her heart.

It is however to be observed that this ardent tempera-

ment, which was often found subversive of prudence in conduct, proved extremely prejudicial to the success of her intellectual efforts. From hence proceeded a proneness to receive erroneous impressions; to reason from the feelings; to be satisfied with a sentiment, or even a phrase, as if it had been an argument: to hasten over the ground towards a conclusion, from finding it more agreeable to occupy any favourite position than win the way to it by legitimate steps. The Genevan character is marked by a disposition to theorize, rather perhaps to coin little theories, small bits of doctrine, petty systems which embrace the easy corners of some subject. That Madame de Staël was wholly exempt from this besetting sin of her country it would be incorrect to affirm; but she redeemed it by the greater extent of her views in general, and by the hardihood of her speculations upon the most interesting questions; and her writings, both in subject and in style, had little indeed of that precision, self-satisfaction, microcosmic feeling, which may be traced in so large a proportion of the works that come from the banks of Lemman Lake. The tone of the sentiments was also abundantly more liberal and less ascetic than to satisfy the code of the city of Calvin. Having mentioned her connection with the great little republic by family, we should add that almost all her patriotic feelings were domiciled in France. Whoever witnessed her chagrin, occasionally approaching to despair, in the spring of 1814, when the consummation so long devoutly prayed for by her and her party had arrived, and, Napoleon being overthrown, the allies entered Paris, must recollect how uncontrollably the Frenchwoman burst forth and triumphed over the politician and the cosmopolite. When Lord Dudley, half in jest, half seriously, expressed his hope that the Cossacks would reach Paris and nail a horse-shoe on the gates of the Tuileries, her alarm and her indignation knew no bounds, and she could only exclaim, "Quoi donc, cette belle France!" almost suffocated by her feelings. The moderation of the allies mitigated the acuteness of these during the remaining period of the occupation; but the

subject of the capture was one to which she ever referred with a bitterness of spirit well calculated to read a useful and a solemn lesson. It is true she endeavoured to see in that great event only a new cause of hating Napoleon, to whose tyranny and ambition she ascribed the fall of France ; but it is also much more than probable that, had she ever again been called to choose between the worst domestic faction, even the worst domestic thralldom, and its subjugation effected in that of her country, she would have said, "No more foreign armies ;" and it is very certain that, if the same option had been presented to her mind before France had ever been overrun, and she had foreseen all she felt on the capture of Paris, she would have rejected this as the worst of all consummations, and withheld all aid to its accomplishment. The inglorious end of Moreau, whose fall many might pity, but whose memory no one respects, adds a striking enforcement to the same patriotic lesson.

The public and the personal character of individuals, always nearly allied, are in women inseparably connected ; so that in describing the one both must have been portrayed. But one peculiarity remains to be added, and it is entitled to distinguished praise. Those persons who are much more learned than their class or order, the self-taught, the *οψιμαθεις*,* and chiefly women well instructed, are somewhat like persons who have risen unexpectedly and quickly to great wealth, letter-proud as these are purse-proud ; apt to look down upon others whose resources are more slender, very apt to fancy both that their own means are boundless, and that none else possesses any at all. Accordingly, beside the love of displaying their stores, it is commonly observed of such scholars that they both believe themselves to know everything, and suppose others to know nothing. But the illustrious woman of whom we are speaking was very far above such a weakness. None less than she made a parade of her acquirements ; none more de-

* Persons late-taught.

ferred to others, or more eagerly availed herself of all opportunities to increase her information. Indeed in society, though naturally fond of shining, she threw herself far too heartily into the conflict to let her think of exhibiting her knowledge; and, if she delighted in the exercise of her eloquence, (as who that possessed it would not?) she never oppressed her hearers with talk for the mere display of reading, nor ever showed the least indifference to the merits of kindred or superior spirits.

The religious feelings of Madame de Staël were always strong; and in the latter part of her life they gained an extraordinary ascendant over her. The originality of her genius made her occasionally indulge in peculiar views on this as on all other subjects. But, as her belief in revelation was sincere, her habits were devout without superstition, and her faith was strong without the least tincture of bigotry or intolerance. She successfully inculcated the same principles in her children; and her daughter both illustrated the Christian Gospel by her writings, and exemplified its beauties in her life.

The warmth of her affections has been recorded: in her family, it is hardly necessary to add, these found the greatest scope and were in the most constant play. But the predominant feeling of her soul was filial love. Her father had ever been her most confidential and attached friend, from whom she had no thought or feeling of her heart concealed. Devotion to him through life, and the most religious and tender veneration for his memory when she lost him, seemed to occupy her whole mind. By her own children she was cherished with the same ardent affection become hereditary; they, and in an especial manner the Duchess de Broglie, were well worthy of the love she ever bore them; and if, to celebrate the capacity of women, as well as to prove how gracefully the rarest gifts of the understanding may be combined with the kindest dispositions of the heart, the moralist will naturally point towards the illustrious mother, he will

also name the admirable daughter, if he would present to the love and respect of mankind the purest example of every female virtue, and of all the accomplishments that can adorn the softer sex.

MIRABEAU FAMILY.

FROM dwelling upon one of the most delightful sights which the history of distinguished characters presents to the view, a family group of celebrated persons, whose virtues even exceeded their genius, and whose lives were spent in more harmony and more tender affection than are often the inmates of the cottage, we are now to turn our eyes upon a picture as different as can well be conceived, and only in the talents and celebrity of its subjects bearing any resemblance to the former. But the contemplation is full of interest, and by no means devoid of instruction.

The great celebrity of Mirabeau, the brilliant part which he performed in the beginning of the French Revolution, and the influence which he exerted over the early course of that memorable event, have given an interest to his private history, which belongs to that of hardly any other individual who never mounted a throne. Accidental circumstances combined with these considerations at once to excite and to gratify the curiosity of the world respecting him. The domestic quarrels of which he was, if not the cause, certainly the occasion, and the disclosures to which the temper and the indiscretion of the parties led, had made the name and the fortunes of this remarkable person familiar to all Europe, as a son, a husband, and a lover, long before he was known upon the great theatre of state affairs, or even in the republic of letters. That he has been more admired for his genius than he deserved is a probable,

although it can by no means be set down as a clear, proposition. That his moral character has been blackened by prejudice and by party, while it has been misunderstood through ignorance of his circumstances and situation, seems to be a matter of no doubt at all. There is, perhaps, no second instance of an individual whose faults have been committed under such a pressure of ill-treatment to besiege and force his virtue rather than of temptation to seduce and betray it. Still less does history present any parallel to the injustice which has been done him by the world, even by those who had no prepossession against him—by the public and by individuals—an injustice which has consisted in uniformly listening to all that his enemies, chiefly of his own forming, said against him—never to any of his own statements—nor even to any of the proofs that existed against those enemies. There is this peculiar to the family quarrels of the Mirabeaus, that in all other such controversies it has become a kind of maxim with the world to punish the parties, if not for their private dissensions, at least for their public disclosures, by believing that all of them were more or less to blame; by declining to be very nice in apportioning their several shares of the censure; and by generally considering those shares as nearly equal. In the instance of Mirabeau alone this rule has been excluded; and, the whole blame being cast upon him, his father and his family have escaped all visitation. But the publication, in 1834 and the subsequent year, of his *Memoirs*, with the correspondence of the family, has occasioned a much more equal distribution of censure, and has introduced us to an acquaintance which we never before could have with two others of the family—the father, till then only known by his obscure writings on political economy, and the uncle, never known at all.

The celebrated Marquess de Mirabeau, father of the Count, and head of that noble family, was one of the founders of the sect of economists in France—indeed, after Quesnai, its chief patriarch. He was also well

known as the author of several important works upon its doctrines, and distinguished for his practical attention to economics as a considerable landowner and a patrician of a most ancient house. But they who had known, or fancied they knew, this distinguished individual the best, find themselves, upon opening the volumes lately published, in the presence of a personage entirely strange to them, and of whose nature, habits, and character they had previously no kind of knowledge. Nothing in truth can be more entirely unlike than the philosopher and the man, the liberal enlightened *Economist* and the haughty aristocratic noble; the friend of Quesnai and the father of Mirabeau; the *Ami des Hommes** and the *Père de Famille*. But all this is not without example; indeed, such discrepancies between men's public and their domestic characters are far from rare. The difference here is carried unfortunately farther. Justice—a rigorous love of the strictest justice—is the characteristic of the Marquess and of his sect; but his treatment of his son offers one perpetual scene of all justice grossly outraged. To observe moderation—to regard the useful end of all things—to act as if they were born not for themselves but for mankind, was the very motto of the economists:—

Secta fuit, servare modum, finemque tenere,
Naturamque sequi, patriæque impendere vitam;
Nec sibi, sed genitum se credere mundo.

But the Marquess's predominant passion was family pride; moderation neither in this nor in any other feeling was ever for an instant the inmate of his mind, nor the regulator of his thoughts; and he always spoke and wrote, and acted in private life as one who never for an instant of his days doubted that the world was made for the *order* (not the *sect*) he belonged to, and that his first

* The title of the Marquess's most famous work.

and highest duty was to keep the Mirabeau family at the head of that favoured class.

To follow the dictates of nature, to devote their lives to the cause of truth, was the residue of the economist's motto. But the most cruel prepossession against his first-born—the most refined cruelty of treatment which his ingenuity could devise for that child—the greatest finesse of every kind employed to ensnare him;—even the expedient of leaving him in wretched circumstances, and restoring him to liberty, in order that he might either terminate his existence in despair, or forfeit his life to the law—accompanied with an adulterous connection which made his own wife leave his house—such are the traits of private character which these volumes represent as belonging to the lover of nature and truth, and these traits are for the most part represented under the infallible testimony of his own hand.

But under that hand we have proofs of a difference still more marvellous, and of which there is certainly no other example. The author of the most dull, heavy, uninteresting books, in the most tiresome, insipid, almost unbearable style, is the writer of about the very best, the most lively, the most entertaining letters, in a style which, for originality, raciness, force, felicity of diction, has scarcely a rival!

The Marquis was born in 1715, the eldest surviving son of a family esteemed ancient and noble even in Provence, and established there for above five centuries. It was the family of Riqueti, or Arrighetti, originally from the neighbouring territory of Italy, and which has produced several eminent men; although it is said that the relationship of the most famous of them all, Riqueti the engineer and author of the Languedoc canal, was denied by the preposterous and barbarous pride of the clan. He was, like all the elder branches of noble French houses, placed betimes in the army: made a Chevalier de Malte at three years of age; an ensign at fourteen; soon after a captain; served with great credit and even distinction at the siege of Kehl and Phillops-

bourg, and at the battles of Dettengen and Clusen; and in 1743, at the age of twenty-eight, received the cross of St. Louis. The death of his father having some years before placed him in a state of independence, he now quitted the army; and, leaving also the order of Malta, he married the Marquise de Saulvebeuf, a widow and a maid; for according to the admirable arrangements of the old *règime* in France (that perfection of patrician wisdom and felicity), she had been married exactly at twelve years old to a gentleman advanced in years, and who, as frequently happened, accomplished his burial before he consummated his marriage. This second marriage did not prove happy in the end, nor do we see who but the philosophical husband is to blame for it. The lady was young, rich, and noble, but not handsome: her virtue was beyond suspicion, however; and, this not satisfying the Marquess, after she had lived fifteen years in peace and comfort with him and borne him eleven children, he quarrelled with her, took into his house Madame de Pailly, a fascinating young Swiss lady; lived with her openly; turned his wife out of doors; and was for fifteen years engaged in a course of litigation with her, and of cruel as well as treacherous proceedings against her, which made both wretched, both the subject of universal talk, and both the objects of general blame, without profiting any human being, except Madame de Pailly, and his cunning old valet, and the lawyers, and the spiteful gossips of the Paris drawing-rooms.

His chief and noble purpose in quitting the profession of arms was to lead a life of literary retirement, and to improve the condition of his rural dependents. Towards these his conduct was always perfect; it was sensible, just, kind; he was their real father, and they were the only children who uniformly found in him the virtues of the parental character. He first went to his château in Provence; but neither the distance from Paris, nor the state of the country there, suited his spirit or agreed with his taste. The reason he assigns for

quitting the residence of his ancestors is abundantly characteristic of the aristocratic temperament which was his master through life, and the source of almost all his own errors and his family's misfortunes.

“On n’y pratiquait plus ce culte de respect attaché à des races antiques, dont la toute puissance est maintenant méconnue ; on ne s’y prosternait plus devant les vieilles races et les gros dos de Malte ; enfin la province, totalement conquise par *l’écritoire*, contenait plus d’animaux armés de plumes que vingt-deux royaumes bien policés n’en devraient renfermer, espèce la plus vénimeuse et la the plus épidémique pour un seigneur.”

Accordingly he purchased the estate of Bignon, fifteen miles from Sens and Nemours, and, soon after, an hotel in Paris. Then and there began the career of philosophy which he ran for half a century, and which only terminated with his life, about the beginning of the French Revolution, when he left the world with a reputation for virtue greatly exaggerated, and for talents much below his due, at the age of seventy-five. No less than twenty-two works claim him for their author ; but those which alone are now well known are “*L’Ami des Hommes*,” “*Théorie de l’Impôt*,” “*Philosophie Rurale*,” and “*Education Civile d’un Prince*.” Beside these voluminous writings, he contributed a vast number of papers to the “*Journal d’Agriculture*” and the “*Ephémérides de Citoyen*,” the former of which reached the bulk of thirty, and the latter of forty volumes.

It may easily be imagined how joyfully such a brother was received into the sect of the Economists, whose zealous supporter he proved, and indeed whose second chief he was acknowledged to be. To their spirit of party, or the more intense attachment which sectaries feel for each other, it is perhaps mainly owing that his faults were so lightly passed over, and his domestic prejudices shared so largely by the French public. As for any active virtues that he displayed, they are con-

fined to his industrious propagation of the *Economical* doctrines, and his humane enlightened government of his peasantry. He mingled, as was usual among our neighbours, even for philosophical patricians, in the society of Paris; and, as was quite of course in the happy times of legitimate government, he was sent to prison by a *lettre de cachet*, the offence being his work on taxation, which gave umbrage to the *Fermiers Généraux*, and cost him a short imprisonment in Vincennes fortress, and some weeks banishment to his estate. The rest of his actions, which brought his name before the public, were his scandalous proceedings against the members of his family, and chiefly his wife and his eldest son.

The next personage in the family group is the Bailli de Mirabeau, the Marquess's brother. A more gallant, honest, amiable, and indeed sensible man, it would be hard to find in any circle or in any situation of life. Partaking of his brother's family pride, but never his follower in suffering it to extinguish the better feelings of his nature; just to a degree of romantic scruple; simple, honest, and open as a child; brave to a fault, so as even to signalise himself in a country, an age, and a profession, where the highest valour was epidemical; kindly in his dispositions, so as to devote his whole time and resources to making others happy; domestic and affectionate in his habits, so as to live for his brother and his nephew, when his vow precluded his having progeny of his own; religious without intolerance; strictly chaste and pure himself, without austerity towards others; and withal a man of the most masculine understanding, the quickest and

even liveliest wit, the best literary taste—the Bailli de Mirabeau presents to our admiration and esteem one of the most interesting characters that ever showed the very rare union of whatever is most attractive with whatever is most respectable. His love and respect for his brother, both for his eminent qualities, and as head of his house, is one of the strongest features in his character; but it is tempered with every feeling of tenderness towards those against whom the Marquess was most bitterly prejudiced; and it leads to constant efforts towards disowning his brother's animosities. His proud independent spirit is shown in the treatment which all who would have encroached upon it were sure to meet at his hands, however exalted their rank or predominant their influence, and without the least thought of any remote effect which his carriage might produce upon his most important interests. Of this we have an interesting trait in the answer he made to Madame de Pompadour, with whom a good understanding was held essential by the minister Nivernois, before he could place him at the head of the marine department, as he wished to do. He had succeeded to admiration in captivating the royal mistress at the first interview, by exhibiting the graces both of his person and his wit, when she chose to remark what a pity it was that the Mirabeaus were so wrong-headed (*que tous ces Mirabeau soient si mauvaises têtes*). “Madame,” (was the answer at once so honourable to his spirit, so creditable to his wit, and so fatal to his views,) “Madame, il est vrai que c’est le titre de légitimité dans cette maison. Mais les bonnes et froides têtes ont fait tant de sottises, et perdu tant d’états, qu’il ne serait peut-être pas fort imprudent d’essayer des mauvaises. Assurément, du moins, elles ne feraient pas pis.”

This excellent man was born in 1717, being about two years younger than his brother. In three years he was received into the Order of Malta, in which he lived and died; served from the age of twelve in the navy; was wounded and taken prisoner by the English:

was made *Capitaine de vaisseau* at thirty-four, and governor of Guadaloupe the year after; retired to Europe for his health in 1755; and next year was seriously wounded at the siege of Port Mahon. During the rest of the war he had staff appointments in the marine department, and was in many dangerous battles and bombardments. He then was recompensed for his wounds and his thirty years' service by the complete neglect of a profligate and ungrateful court, which drove him into retirement; and he went to Malta, where he remained devoted to the affairs of the Order till he obtained a *Commanderie* in 1766, which carried him into France, and he there devoted the rest of his honourable life to literary ease.

Of Madame du Saillant, married into the elder branch of the amiable and revered family of Lasteyrie,* but little is known. She was the eldest and most gifted of the Marquess's daughters. Her sister, Madame de Cabris, though less clever and accomplished, would in any other family have passed for a wonder; but her life and habits were profligate, and the Mirabeau annals often note the exploits of a certain Briançon, her lover, a person of coarse manners, vulgar, cunning, and dishonourable habits, whom nevertheless the Marquess thought fit to employ, partly as a spy and partly as a thief-catcher, to entrap or to seize his son. Nor is there any of those annals more painful, we might almost say disgusting, than that in which this low creature plays his part. Of Madame de Pailly much less appears directly, though her mischief-making hand is perpetually seen in all the history of the family; but the exquisite delicacy of the Bailli, and his prodigious respect and tenderness for his brother, made him shun all mention of her, and all allusion to her, except on one occasion, when

* Count Charles Lasteyrie is a younger brother of this house; he is known, respected, and beloved by all the friends of humanity.

he perceived her influence hard at work to produce a new quarrel between the father and the son, as soon as they had been restored to each other's society after a separation of ten years, and immediately after they had seized the opportunity of her absence from the château to become somewhat cordial together. Then it is that the good Bailli indites some letters full of sense, and no less honourable to his heart than to his head.

“ Trop de gens se mêlent de tes affaires ; tu me comprendas si tu veux ; que tout ce qui te paraît obscur soit éclairci par toi-même, et point d'yeux étrangers, surtout des yeux féminins ; plus ces yeux-là ont d'esprit et sont aimables, plus il faut s'en méfier, comme de ceux d'une belle Circé, derrière laquelle l'esprit de domination et de jalousie s'établit et s'insinue, de manière que les plus grands hommes en sont les dupes. Tu me dis, pour t'obstiner à m'envoyer ton fils et à me le laisser, le supposant rejoint à *la Cigale ayant chanté tout l'été*, que près de toi *sainte Jalouserie*, comme disait notre mère, se logerait entre les deux belles-sœurs, si celle d'Aix était chez toi ; tu cites pour cela le passé. Tu te méprends à ce qui fut dit alors, et tu adaptes les paroles à l'objet qu'elles n'avaient pas, et point à celui qu'il était tout simple qu'elles eussent ; car quelqu'un ne voulait pas qu'il y eût de coiffes dans la maison ; mon chapeau même y déplaisait. Les femmes ne savent qu'intriguer, surtout les femmes d'esprit, sorte d'animal le plus dangereux de tous ; celle en qui tu as une trop forte confiance est comme les autres ; vent être la maîtresse : tout ce qui peut faire obstacle à cet empire, ou le partager, lui est désagréable, et en est hai cordialement. Règle générale et sans exception, tout femme, dans sa position, veut gouverner absolument, et elle comme les autres ; je ne saurais me rappeler mille petits traits, même vis-à-vis de moi, qui, comme tu crois bien, ne m'en souciais guère ; mais ce qui à moi, homme tout-à-fait libre et indépendant, ne me faisait rien, choque beaucoup

les enfans ; elle n'a jamais aimé aucun des tiens ; bien est-il vrai que, sauf Saillanette, tout le reste ne paraissait pas très-aimable ; mais Caroline elle même, notre douce et paisible Caroline, la femme la plus émoliente qui fut jamais, Caroline, qui n'a des yeux que pour son père ; son mari, et ses enfans, et qui t'est si fort attachée, tu te tromperais fort si tu croyais que l'autre l'aimât ; compte que, sans me mêler trop dans les choses, je vois à peu près tout, et je laisse aller, parce que je sais qu'on ne peut pas empêcher la rivière de couler."

"J'ai toujours vu, ou à peu près, les défauts des gens que j'aime. Je ne vois même bien que ceux-là ; mais, faute d'archanges, il faut aimer des créatures imparfaites. Il ne faut pas même avoir vécu la moitié de mon âge, pour s'être persuadé de cela, sans quoi l'on se prendrait bien en aversion soi-même. Tu as grande raison de dire que les mouches incommode plus que les éléphants ; et, quand nous voulons voir une mouche par le venin, nous en faisons un éléphant des notre faciende. Je t'assure, par exemple, que la personne dont nous parlions, et sur qui tu décoches des sarcasmes tranchans et affilés par la queue, comme disait Montagne, m'a dit, plus de cinq cents fois peut-être, dans la longue suite de mes secousses, où il s'est trouvé bien des mécomptes et des faussaires ; *bien d'honnêtes gens s'intéressent véritablement à vous ; le public même s'indignerait de vos malheurs, si vous ne les portiez vous-même ; mais vous n'avez vraiment que deux cœurs à vous, le bon Bailli et moi.*"

The Bailli's answer is also admirable:—

"*Le bon Bailli ! le bon Bailli !* eh ! par saint Polycarpe, monsieur le marquis et mon très-cher frère aîné, avec qui diable veux-tu que mon excellence rabâche, si ce n'est avec toi ? *Le bon Bailli !* La personne qui a dit ce mot a fait acte de fausseté ; *le bon Bailli !* la sait, et le voit depuis longtemps sans le

dire ; il s'est bien, dès 1750, aperçu que cette personne ne l'aimait pas, et tu l'aurais bien vu, si elle avait cru possible de te détacher de moi ; depuis, j'ai cent fois vu qu'on a voué aux deux frères la haine la plus implacable ; j'en ai bien ma part ; Saillanette et du Saillant aussi Va, crois-moi, une étrangère qui s'introduit dans une maison y fait naître la discorde et fait mettre en mouvement toutes les passions qui suivent la discorde. Du reste, n'en parlons plus."

But let us now come to the most important figure by far in this group. Honoré Gabriel Mirabeau was endowed by nature with a quick and vigorous understanding, a lively imagination, passions more vehement than are almost ever seen in union with such intellectual powers, and disposition naturally kindly and humane. His temperament led to the early unfolding both of his bodily and mental faculties ; and there are instances on record of children forming such manly ideas as he seems to have imbibed, even during his infancy. The peculiar circumstances in which he was, from his boyhood upwards, placed by the singular opinions, prejudices, and temper of his father, exercised a most powerful influence upon his whole conduct, and must have deeply affected his character in every material respect. Yet we may appreciate his merits and his faults, even through the artificial covering which was thus thrown over his nature ; and, although impetuosity of feelings, and a proportionate disregard of the obstacles which he ought to have respected instead of overleaping, forms a predominant feature of his mind and his habits, we cannot fairly charge him with any of those faults which go mainly to form the vicious disposition. Forced first into estrangement from the society of his family, and afterwards into contempt of the parental authority, it must be admitted that originally he had strong filial affections, and no desire at all to set at defiance a control which he held peculiarly sacred ; nor is it to be forgotten that, when his two parents quarrelled, he resisted all attempts of the one to make him side against the other—even when the

restoration of his own liberty might have been the reward of such an offensive alliance against their common oppressor. Nay, the veneration for his father, which he had early imbibed, never was extinguished by any persecution; for we find him to the last feeling an intellectual superiority, which certainly did not exist, and always refraining from retaliating the charges brought against himself for his indecorous life, by any allusion to the worse life of the Marquess.* The parsimonious treatment to which his comfort and respectability in the world was all his life sacrificed, and which his father chose to reconcile with a family pride almost without a parallel, never made the son forget who and what he was, by descending to any act of meanness or dishonour; and, while pressed by want of the common necessities of life, and tortured by the far more unbearable sight of those he most loved suffering the same privations, his exertions to relieve himself were always confined to the works of honest, though obscure, industry; nor has any one of his innumerable enemies, domestic, political, or personal, ever charged him with ever using, for the purpose of solicitation, that pen which was his only resource against want. The shifts and contrivances to which needy men, with strong passions, and in high stations, so often resort, and which would seem to justify in their case the uncharitable saying, that integrity and poverty are as hard to reconcile as it is for an empty sack to stand upright—have never been imputed to Mirabeau, at a time when his whole soul was engrossed by an over-powering passion, or his senses betwitched by a life of pleasure, or his resources brought to an ebb little above those of the menial or the peasant. It would have been well if the influence of disorderly passions had not plunged him into other excesses no less blameable, though not, perhaps, at

* One work alone, which attacked the Marquess, is *said* to be his. But the evidence of authorship is very scanty, and it seems hardly fair, on such grounds, to charge him with so great a departure from his general line of conduct.

all dishonest or mercenary. It is not the connection he formed with Madame le Monnier to which we refer, because for that, in its commencement, there were many excuses, A girl of eighteen married to a man of seventy-five, and only nominally married to this keeper, alternately confiding and jealous—now tempting her by indulgence and carelessness—now watching and restraining with tormenting and suspicious rigour—first awakened in Mirabeau's bosom the most irresistible of the passions, and all the more dangerous for so often assuming the garb, and even uniting itself with the reality, of virtuous propensities. The elopement which followed, and was caused by a dislike on both their parts to play the hypocrite and live with him whom they were deceiving, proved altogether alien to the habits of French society, and severely outraged the feelings of those refined profligates who, reckoning vice itself nothing, hold indecorum to be the worst of enormities: in other words, prefer the semblance to the reality of virtue, and forgive one offence if another, the worse crime of falsehood, be added to veil it from public view.

Accordingly, there was an outcry raised throughout all society, not in France only, but in Europe, at the unheard-of atrocity. A young woman had left her superannuated husband, whom she had, by the customs of aristocratic society, been compelled to take for her tyrant and tormentor, under the name of a husband, and had left him for one of an age nearer her own, and who sacrificed himself for her deliverance. The lovers had rebelled against those rules which regulated the vicious intercourse of nobles in legitimate France; they had outraged all the finer feelings of patrician nature, by refusing to lead a life of pretence, and treachery, and secret indulgence; they had even brought into jeopardy the long-established security of illicit intercourse, understood without being avowed; and the veil was thus about to be torn away from all the endearing immoralities that give occupation and interest to noble life, and break the calm monotony of an existence which demands

that it never shall be ruffled but by voluntary excitements, nor ever let alone while it can be tickled into enjoyment. Hence all society (that is, all the upper and worthless portion of it) combined "*to a woman*" against the hapless pair: Mirabeau was regarded as a monster; and the conduct of his father, who hunted him over all Europe, and then flung him into a prison for the best years of his life, was excused by all, and blamed by none; while no one ever thought of visiting the other party with the slightest censure—no one ever ventured to "hint a doubt, or hesitate dislike," of that very father turning his wife, the mother of his daughters, out of doors, and installing a mistress in her room.

The darker portion of Mirabeau's conduct relates to *Sophie*—not to Madame le Monnier. When, under that name, he dragged her before the public, and indulged a loose and prurient fancy, in providing for the worst appetites of licentious minds, he became justly the object of aversion, and even of disgust; and ranged himself with the writers of obscene works, but took the precedence of these in profligacy, by making his own amours the theme of his abandoned contemplations.* It is the very worst passage in his history; and it is nearly the only one which admits neither defence nor palliation. The other grave charge to which he is exposed, of publishing the Berlin Correspondence, is, though on different grounds, alike without justification. In extenuation of it, it has been observed that the whole object of his existence depended upon the supplies which it furnished. His election in Provence would, without it, have been hopeless. But this is a sorry topic even of palliation.

* The writings alluded to were the works of some of his hours of confinement during near four years of solitary imprisonment, and *may* have been afterwards used from necessity. If that was the cause of giving such shameful effusions publicity, we may well say that the offence of the composition, in such circumstances, disgusting as it was, merits the least grave portion of the blame.

But if all these and more vices, these and more fatal indiscretions, may be justly charged on Mirabeau, it is fit we ever should bear in mind the treatment which he constantly experienced from a parent whose heart had been alienated, and whose very reason had been perverted by the arts of an intriguing woman. All the juvenile follies of the fiery young man are exaggerated; his conduct is condemned in the mass; if he does well, he is charged with caprice; if he errs, it is his diabolical nature that accounts for it. He marries; the match proves an unhappy one. He is kept generally without a shilling of allowance, and expected to live like a noble provençal. He makes love to Madame le Monnier, and elopes with her; he is denounced as a monster; cited before a court of provincial *justice* (as it was termed), and condemned to death in his absence. He flies; he is pursued by his father with inexorable severity, and beset with spies, and even bravoës. Nothing can be more terrible than the excesses of parental rage to which family pride and personal prejudice had wrought up the Marquess's feelings. In furious letters the violent passions of the old noble break out. The good Bailli tries long and long to mediate and to soften; but at length even he is forced to bend before the storm; and the correspondence of the brothers presents only letters and answers, almost alike violent and determined against him. At length the Marquess succeeds in seizing his son's person, and he is immured for forty-two months in the fortress of Vincennes; only, after a long interval, allowed books and pen and ink; and never suffered to correspond without his letters being read by the governor, whose affections, as usual, he entirely gained.

On his liberation he had a painful interview with Madame le Monnier—his Sophie—who had been supposed faithless, and he charged her with the offence; she defended her conduct, and recriminated upon her lover, who, it may be presumed, could not so easily repel the accusation. They parted in mutual displeasure, and the

estrangement, unhappily, was eternal. She remained in the monastery where she had taken refuge, until her husband's death; and then continued in an adjoining house, having formed an intimate friendship with the sisters of the convent. An attachment grew up between herself and a most deserving man, but who, unhappily, before their intended marriage took place, was seized with pulmonary consumption, and died in her arms, after her assiduous and affectionate attendance of many months by his sick couch. An aged and worthy physician and his wife had taken this ill-fated lady under their protection, and vainly endeavoured to console her. She had frequently before contemplated suicide, and always was resolved to seek refuge in it from her family's and her husband's persecutions. Some days before her last misfortune, an accidental death by the fumes of charcoal had happened in the neighbourhood, and drawn her attention to this mode of self-destruction. She had examined the particulars, and made inquiries of the physician as to the experiment and its conditions. With her wonted decision of mind she took her resolution prospectively, and in the contemplation of her betrothed's death. With her wonted firmness of purpose she executed the resolve, and was found dead an hour after his decease, in her chamber, where she had placed a brazier of live charcoal, after closing the windows and the doors. Such are the facts respecting the end of this noble-minded and ill-fated woman; and they are attested by the evidence of the physician's family, of the nuns, and even of the inquiry judicially instituted by the local authorities. The mere date of the death, however, and the known courtship and intended marriage, are enough to convict of the most glaring falsehood those reports which soon after were spread by the implacable enemies of Mirabeau; and which, it is painful to think, found their way into works of great credit. Thus, one of the greatest historians of the Revolution says, that on his liberation from Vincennes, he deserted Sophie, who put a period to her existence,—leaving it to be inferred that

there was no quarrel : but that is comparatively immaterial, for the uncharitable may say he sought the quarrel to cover his intended desertion—but leaving it also to be inferred, which is absolutely untrue and indeed impossible, that her suicide was caused by his conduct.

The history of Mirabeau's private life, and his treatment by his family, forces upon the reader's mind one striking reflection upon the truly wretched state of society under the old *régime*. To the merciless aristocracy which, under, perhaps we should rather say along with, the despot, swayed the country, Mirabeau was indebted for the ill-treatment, nay, the persecution, of his father. To the same cause, the Marchioness, his mother, was indebted for her ill-assorted marriage, first with a man old enough to be her father, while she was an infant, and next to a man she never was loved by ; and to the same cause she owed the persecution she encountered when his coldness had been turned into aversion. To the same cause, Madame le Monnier owed her forced marriage, when a girl, to a man old enough to be her great-grandfather, and the life of agony, rather than misery, she afterwards led. The powers of the crown came in aid of aristocratic pride and aristocratic fury ; and the State prison yawned to receive whatever victim was required by the demon of family pride or domestic tyranny—aping, almost passing, the tyranny of the crown. These are the blessings which the revolution is charged with having torn from unhappy France ! These are the glories, and this the felicity, of the old *régime* ! These are the goods which the gods of legitimacy provide for their votaries ! And to regain these joys it is, that some men would assist the Carlist handful of priests and nobles against the thirty millions of our free and dauntless neighbours—just as, to perpetuate the like glories of absolute monarchy and pure aristocracy elsewhere, the same politicians are knit in the bands of hearty friendship with all that is most bigoted and despotical in countries not yet visited by the irresistible wave of general reform.

It will complete the view of Mirabeau's character, if we add that he joined to extraordinary talents, and a most brilliant fancy, powers of application rarely found in such association; that his vigorous reasoning, whether from some natural defect of judgment, or from the influence of feeling and passion, often proved an unsafe guide, even in speculation, still oftener in action; that, slave as he too generally proved to the love of indulgence, his courage was ever sustained above all suspicion; that even his share of a virtue far more rare, true fortitude under calamity, surpassed that of most men; and that all the hardships he had undergone, and the torments he had suffered from so many forms of ingenious persecution, never for a moment infused any gall into a disposition originally and throughout benevolent and kind.

Of his genius, the best monuments that remain are his Speeches, and even these were not always his own composition. Both Dumont, Duroveray, and Pellenc, men of distinguished ability, did more than assist him in their production; but some of the finest are known to have been his own; and the greatest passages, those which produced the most magical effects, were the inspiration of the moment. His literary works were too often produced under the pressure of want, to be well digested, or carefully finished. The chief of them, his "*Monarchie Prussienne*," is no doubt a vast collection of statistical facts; and, as he had access to the whole of the information which was possessed by the government upon the subject, it is impossible to say that he has not so used his materials as to produce a work of value. Yet the arrangement is not peculiarly felicitous; nor are the proofs on which the statements rest sifted with much care; while the dissertations, that plentifully garnish it, are often very prolix, and founded upon economical principles, which, though generally sound, being, indeed, those of the modern system, are applied, as it were by rote, to any case, and made the ground of decision without the least regard to the limitations that must practically be intro-

duced into the rules, or the exceptions that occur to their application. As for his intimate friend Major Mauvillon's share in this work, the subject of so many exaggerations, he has himself frankly admitted that it was altogether subordinate, although of great importance, nay, essential, to the execution of the plan. The military details, especially, owe to his talents and experience their principal value. The "*Essai sur le Despotisme*," his earliest political production, is, though severely judged by his own criticism, a work of extraordinary merit; and the "*Considérations sur l'Agiotage*," and the essay on "*Lettres de Cachet*," may probably be esteemed his best tracts. But we are here speaking of those writings which partake not of the oratorical character; for to estimate Mirabeau's genius, we must look at the sudden and occasional productions of his pen, which resemble speeches more than books, and which, indeed, though never spoken, belong far more to the rhetorical than the literary or scientific class of writings. Among these the celebrated "*Réponse aux Protestations des Possédant Fiefs*," published in February, 1788, and written, as it were, off-hand, justly deserves the highest place; and it would be difficult to match it in the history of French eloquence.

Before closing these observations upon Mirabeau's merits as an author, it is fit to add that no man ever held the literary character higher, or comported himself more proudly in its investiture. He never but once published anything without his name; he never deemed that literary labour, for the purpose of just and honest gain, was other than a source of honour; he gloried in the name of author; and never was ashamed of his calling, of the labours which it imposed, or the privations which it entailed upon him. He has, in one striking passage of his very voluminous writings, expressed sentiments upon the importance of the Republic of Letters, and the feelings of literary men, so just and so useful for all whom they apply, that it is proper to transcribe them, and give so wholesome a lesson more general circulation.

“ Ah ! s'ils se dévouaient loyalement au noble métier d'être utiles ! Si leur indomptable amour-propre pouvait composer avec lui-même, et sacrifier la gloire à la dignité ! Si, au lieu de s'avilir, de s'entredéchirer, de détruire réciproquement leur influence, ils réunissaient leurs efforts et leurs travaux pour terrasser l'ambitieux qui usurpe, l'imposteur qui égare, le lâche qui se vend ; si, méprisant le vil métier de gladiateurs littéraires, ils se croisaient en véritables frères d'armes contre les préjugés, le mensonge, le charlatanisme, la superstition, la tyrannie, de quelque genre qu'elle soit, en moins d'un siècle la face de la terre serait changée ! ”

Of the violent and precocious physical temperament of Mirabeau, mention has already been made. A slight notice of his personal appearance may not inappropriately close this imperfect sketch. His ugliness was so great as almost to become proverbial ; and features, naturally harsh and even distorted, were rendered still more repulsive by the deep furrows of the confluent small-pox. His natural vanity, almost as exaggerated as his deformity, even drew from its excess the materials of gratification. “ Personne ” (he used to say), “ ne connaît la puissance de ma laideur ; ” and he was wont to speak of its “ *sublimity*. ” The power of his eye, however, was undeniable, and the spirit and expression which his mind threw into all his countenance made it, how plain soever, anything rather than uninteresting or disgusting. The arch reply of M. de Talleyrand is well known, as illustrative alike of Mirabeau's mental and bodily imperfections. He was dilating upon the qualities which must meet in whoever should aspire to govern France under a free constitution, and was enunciating, “ Il faut qu'il soit éloquent—fougueux—noble ”—and many other qualities notoriously possessed by himself—when the witty and wily statesman added, “ Et qu'il soit tracé de la petite vérole, n'est-ce pas ? ”

We have hitherto been dwelling upon the private history and the personal qualities of this celebrated individual,

whose political history is intimately mixed up with the first stage of the French Revolution, and whose public character has been sketched by so fine a pen,* that humbler artists may well abandon the task in despair. But, before adding the few remarks required by this subject, one may be offered which the daughter of Neckar could less easily make. We may express the indignation with which every man of good feelings, and indeed of sound principles, must regard his attacks upon that venerable man. That he there suffered personal dislike to guide his pen and direct his conduct cannot be doubted. Nor can any one avoid agreeing with his candid and even favourable commentator, the amiable, and eloquent, and sensible Dumont, in his reprobation of the sudden turn which his course took when policy required a suspension of hostilities; and the quick transition from menaced and even boasted destruction to absolute neutrality—hardly to be exceeded by the scandalous scenes, so disgusting to all honourable minds, in later times enacted before our eyes, by certain politicians of the present day. Nothing can exceed the acrimony of Mirabeau towards Neckar, except the mild and dignified patience, approaching to indifference, of that excellent man, under the attack.

Although it is undeniable that his whole conduct in the scenes which made him and all France a politician, his spirit and his capacity—above all, his readiness, his fertility of resources, and his brilliant eloquence,—constantly appeared, and always produced with certainty their natural effect, of influencing the course of events in a marvellous degree; yet it may be fairly questioned if, in all that eventful history so made to try men's souls, one individual appeared whose conduct was more under the interested impulse of merely selfish feelings, and guided by more exclusively personal calculations of interest. Living in times when even the coldest natures were kindled with patriotic zeal, and the most calculating

* Madame de Staël, "Sur la Revolution Française.

were carried away into a forgetfulness of their own interests, he, whose nature was fiery, and whose conduct had been a tissue of indiscretions, seems to have always practised enthusiasm as a means towards an end, and to have made the speculations for his own benefit—first in power, next in profit—the business of his public life. With all his warmth of eloquence, all his admirably acted passion, all his effective display of ready feeling, as each occasion required, it may be safely affirmed that Robespierre himself showed far more genuine zeal for the propagation of his principles, far more fanaticism in his devotion to popular rights, a far more unquenchable hatred of courts, and of every tyranny but his own.

Mirabeau contributed by his courage and his eloquence to the destruction of the old monarchy more than any one individual, more even than Neckar did by his weakness and his inconsistency. His was the first eloquence that emancipated France ever experienced. Admitted at length to assist in popular assemblies, addressed as the arbiter of the country's fate, called to perform their part by debating and hearing debates, it was by Mirabeau that the people were first made to feel the force of the orator, first taught what it was to hear spoken reason and spoken passion; and the silence of ages in those halls was first broken by the thunder of his voice echoing through the lofty vaults now covering multitudes of excited men. That his eloquence should in such circumstances pass for more than its value was inevitable; and that its power should be prodigious in proportion to the novelty of the occasion, was quite a matter of course. No one ever ruled assemblies, either of the people or of their representatives, with a more absolute sway; none ever reaped an ampler harvest of popular sympathy and popular applause than he did when he broke up the public mind lying waste in France, and never till then touched or subdued by the Rhetorician's art. But no sooner had he overthrown all the institutions of the monarchy than he entered into treaty with the court, to

whose weakness his influence had become necessary as a restorative or a prop. It is possible, no doubt, that he may have felt the perils in which he had involved the country; but it is certain that the price of his assistance in rescuing her was stipulated with all the detail of the most sordid chaffering; and it is as undeniable that, had not death taken him from the stage at the moment of his greatest popularity, he must have stood or sunk before the world in a few weeks, as a traitor to the people, purchased with a price, and that price a large sum and a large income in the current coin of the realm.*

Nor was his first embarking in the revolutionary struggle the dictate of democratic principle, the result of any dream of equal liberty. A patrician by birth, aristocratic by nature, pampered by luxurious habits, the vortex of popular contention and sweeping leveling change was no element for him to breathe in, nor was republican simplicity the natural hue and pattern of his artificial habits. But he had quarrelled with that order which he alone valued, and whose friendly intercourse alone he could bear: he found the circle of fashion shut against his vices, and, as Madame de Staël has not more wittily than correctly phrased it, he set fire to the edifice of society in order to force open the doors of the Paris drawing-rooms to himself. (“Il fallait mettre le feu à l’édifice social, pour que les portes des salons de Paris lui fussent ouvertes.”)

It is another trait of the same master, and as just as the former, that, like all unprincipled men, he saw all along only his own interest in the affairs of his country, and his foresight was bounded by his selfishness. (“Comme tous les hommes sans morale, il vit d’abord son intérêt personnel dans la chose publique, et sa prévoyance fut bornée par son égoïsme.”) The truth which this reflection discloses is of great account in contrast-

* The shameful contract, signed by both parties, Count d’Ariois and Mirabeau himself, is preserved, and is printed in Lafayette’s Memoirs.

ing the conduct of statesmen, as it is of the last importance in its relation to all public affairs. Nothing can more fetter the powers of the understanding than selfish and profligate principles; nothing more disqualify men for noble enterprise; nothing more obstruct, more contract the current of state affairs. The fatal influence of a bad disposition, of loose principles, of unworthy feelings, over the intellectual powers, is a topic of frequent use, not with the preacher so much as with the moral philosopher; because it is of a nature too refined for an ordinary audience. But it is an important chapter in psychology, as well as in ethics; and, unfortunately, the illustrations which it derives from facts are by no means confined to those which the secret manners of courts and the annals of absolute monarchy furnish to the student of history. Popular governments supply even more largely their quota of this contribution; because it is there chiefly that political genius can shine, and it is there that the sinister influence of bad principles interposes to obscure and to eclipse its rays. The habitual love of place; the aversion to serve the people without ruling over them; the repugnance to give up the station once possessed; to tear from the lips the intoxicating cup of power, when honour and duty commands that it shall pass—what dismal havoc has this made in the fairest prospects of usefulness and of fame—but also how mournfully has it marred the noblest features in the aspect of political genius! The visible face of public affairs, the page of parliamentary history in our own country, bears a sad testimony to this melancholy truth. But the mischief stops not here. If we see so many instances of bright prospects clouded over when the gifts of the understanding have been displayed before the malignant influence of selfish interests obscured or perverted them—how many more cases must there be of a similar bias having prevented their ever being disclosed! Who can tell how much heavenly genius may lie buried under the mass of earth-born sordid influence—how often the genial current of the soul may have been frozen

by base, calculating, selfish policy—or, in how many hearts pregnant with celestial fire, the spark may have been extinguished ere yet it kindled into flame; extinguished by the cold and sordid propensity to seek office and to keep it, so epidemic among statesmen in modern times, and among all who aspire to be statesmen? Mirabeau was assuredly not one of these; but his genius had no sooner blazed forth in the first scenes of the Revolution, than it was cramped in all its aspirations by the baser materials which predominated in his extraordinarily mixed nature.

He did not nearly reach the ordinary term of the lives of statesmen, less nearly by six or seven years than Mr. Pitt, for he died at forty-two; but he lived in times when each week staggered under the load of events that had formerly made centuries to bend; and he thus lived long enough to show all that he could have attained if his life had been prolonged to the usual period. Had he perished a few weeks earlier, perhaps a few days, some doubt might have existed over the course which awaited him if he had survived; for his purchase by the court was but just completed when he died, and his eagerness to be bought had made him precipitately hurry on the completion of the bargain. Of one thing we cannot doubt, that in a few months, possibly weeks, he would have become hateful to the people whose idol he was at his death; and that his whole influence, his character for patriotism, his reputation for political courage, even the fame of his talents, would have perished in attempting to earn the stipulated price, by vain efforts to stem the revolutionary torrent which he, more than any one, had let loose, and to save the court to whom he had sold himself after accomplishing its destruction. It is probable that he would have emigrated, and lived obscure and penniless abroad. It is next to certain that, had he remained in France, he would have been among the first victims of the reign of terror; and, the daring profligacy of his conduct offering an almost soli-

tary instance of personal corruption among the errors and the crimes of the day, he would have left behind him a less enviable reputation, unless for cruelty of which he had nothing, than even the worst of the men whose unprincipled but fanatical ambition soon after his decease deluged France in blood and convulsed all Europe in war.

CARNÔT.

It is impossible to find a greater contrast than the solid genius and severe virtue of Carnôt presents to all the qualities of that brilliant and worthless person whom we have just been contemplating.* Endowed with the greatest faculties of the understanding—cultivating these with the assiduity which to an ordinary capacity is of absolute necessity, but which an exalted one cannot despise if mighty deeds are to be done—exercising them through a long life upon the worthiest objects—despising all the outward accomplishments that dazzle the vulgar—never even addicting himself to the practice of those arts which enable the natural leaders of mankind to guide the multitude—and seeking only for the influence over other minds which was to be acquired by the actions that his own enabled him to perform—Carnôt offers to the admiration of posterity, as he did to his own times, a rare instance of the triumphs of purely intellectual excellence without one single adventitious aid, whether from station, or from wealth, or from the attraction of superficial or ornamental qualities, or from the happy accidents of fortune. We trace at every step his sterling worth producing its appropriate effect without external aid of any sort; to each successive eminence which he reached we see him raised by merit alone; in all his conflicts with adversity, with oppression, with difficulties of every sort and magnitude, almost with nature herself in some instances, we observe the struggle of intellectual superiority; and the commanding position which he thus took, he retained by the same means, nor to maintain it ever stooped a hair's-breadth from

* Mirabeau.

the lofty attitude in which he had always climed nor ever crawled.

This in any state of affairs is a prodigious merit—in one of change and uncertainty and revolution it is incomparably more rare and more to be admired; but it is not the highest claim to our respect which this great man prefers. His genius was exalted, and it was surpassed by his virtue. An absolute self-denial in all the particulars where human passions bear most sway over ordinary minds; an immoveable fortitude in all those situations in which human weakness is most apt to yield; a courage of every kind, from the highest to the most vulgar, from the courage of the statesman to that of the grenadier; the active valour of braving danger, and the calmness which can command every faculty of the soul in the midst of extreme perils; an entire devotion to the maintenance of his principles at any personal sacrifices and at all hazards; an enthusiastic zeal for the service of his country and his kind; all embellished by a modesty which made the glory of his exertions alone feel cumbrous to him—these rare qualities seemed to revive the old Roman for the admiration, if not for the imitation and improvement, of a degenerate age—but to these was added a tenderness of disposition which the old Roman either strove to stifle within him, or to which his nature was alien and strange.

The modesty which has just been remarked as a distinguishing feature of his character, and his carelessness about the opinion entertained of his conduct, provided he acted so as to satisfy his own conscience according to his own sense of duty, have conspired to give him a very different place in the estimation of the world at large from that which belongs to him of right—making his genius be undervalued and his moral worth misconceived. Some details become therefore necessary upon both these points.

His aptitude and his taste for military affairs, destined afterwards to perform so important a part in the history of Europe, displayed itself in a singular manner

while yet a child. Being taken for the first time to a theatre where some siege or other warlike operation was represented, he astonished the audience by interrupting the piece to complain of the manner in which the general had disposed his men and his guns, crying out to him that his men were in fire, and calling upon him loudly to change his position. In fact the men were so placed as to be commanded by a battery. The mathematical sciences absorbed his whole attention for some years; and his celebrated Theorem on the measure of lost forces, published early in life, shows with what success his studies were pursued. But his reading was general; his feelings were ever alive to the duties of a man and a citizen; his enthusiasm was kindled by nothing so much as by the records of benevolent and patriotic actions. That eloquence, the result of strong feelings and a correct taste, would have been his in no common measure had he studied words as much as things, we have the strongest proof of the success of his first production, the *Eloge de Vauban*, crowned by the Academy of Dijon, and from which a passage of singular beauty, admirably characteristic of the writer, may be cited:—"C'était un de ces hommes que la nature a donné au monde tout formés à la bienfaisance: doués, comme l'abeille, d'une activité innée pour le bien général; qui ne peuvent séparer leur sort de celui de la république, et qui, membres intimes de la société, vivent, prospèrent, souffrent, et languissent avec elle."

His habitual courage was displayed on this occasion; the panegyric boldly bestowed by him on Montalembert gave inexpressible offence, and caused him to be confined in Vincennes under a lettre de cachet; one of the causes probably of the hatred which he so steadily showed to arbitrary power.

But scenes now approached which were destined to suspend his scientific pursuits, and to rouse his political energies. He saw the earlier portion of the Revolution unmoved; but he was the first military man who joined it, having then the rank of Lieutenant of Engineers; and he was elected as deputy for St. Omer to the Legis-

lative Assembly. He sat in judgment on the King, and voted for his death; but his absence on a military commission prevented him from taking any part in the highly reprehensible proceedings which led to the trial. Of these he loudly disapproved; but when the whole had been fixed, he considered himself as in the position of a judge called upon to determine a question already prepared, brought before him ripe for decision, and in which he had no choice but to deliver his opinion, whatever that might be.

In April, 1793, was formed the celebrated Committee of Public Safety; that body which has filled the world with the renown of its great actions, the terror of its name, and the infamy of its crimes.* The country was then threatened with invasion from every point; a march upon Paris was the avowed object of the allies; insurrections were plotting, aided by foreigners in every part of France; one great province was in open rebellion; Paris abounded in parties resolved on destroying the revolutionary and restoring the ancient Government—when a general sense of the absolute

* It is only justice to observe, that, as the guilty are generally made answerable for more than they have perpetrated, so this body has been incorrectly supposed to have done much that was really the work of others. It never possessed any other function but that of putting persons on their trial; and the court, it could hardly be called of justice, the Revolutionary Tribunal, was altogether the creation and generally the creature of the Convention. But even that hateful tribunal, far worse than the committee, acquitted many more than it condemned; and as each cause was defended, so it is well known that no advocate ever suffered for the freedom of his defence. It is far from being the design of this note to lessen the execration justly felt of those crimes which covered the French name with disgrace, which paved the way for the subjugation of the Republic, which facilitated the extinction of public liberty, and indeed ended in the conquest of France. But it was observed by a sagacious and philosophical person well acquainted with the history of his country, and to whose suggestions this sketch is greatly indebted, that the remarks in the text seemed, if unqualified, to sanction the common opinion entertained in foreign countries, which confounds together the committee and the Revolutionary Tribunal, and cast upon the former body all that was done by the Convention and the Clubs.

necessity, for a vigorous, concentrated, united executive power to control disaffection, and apply the national force in defence of the State, both against foreign and domestic enemies, gave birth to the famous committee, which immediately proceeded to rule with a sceptre of iron, and to war with the sword of millions. Of this committee, Carnôt, then only Lieutenant of Engineers, was named a member, after it had existed for two months; and, as it was immediately found wholly impossible to pursue the plan first laid down for its operations, of discussing fully each act to be done and then deciding upon it by a majority of voices, a division was made of the labours, and a distribution of the members in departments, each being alone the ruler of his own province, and alone held responsible for its measures, although a certain number of signatures was required to give the acts of each validity. The whole department of war, as well the organization of the military force as its operations in the field, was assigned to Carnôt. Others, as Robert Lindet, and Prieur de la Côté d'Or, were appointed to superintend the Commissariat and Armament departments; but those whom the world has most heard of, most dreaded, and most justly execrated, were the five to whom was given up the superintendence of the Police—Robespierre, Couthon, Billaud Varrennes, St. Just, and Collot d'Herbois—all of whom, except St. Just, a young man of an enthusiastic temperament, and, until corrupted by absolute power, of a virtuous disposition, were regarded in their own day, and will be loathed by succeeding ages, as among the greatest monsters that ever disgraced the human name.* The annals of ancient tyrants alone present scenes of darker atrocity than the reign of terror; for the massacres by the Bourbons on the Eve of St. Bartholomew, and by the Irish Papists in 1641, though more prodigal of blood, were a momentary ebullition of religious fury, and not, like those of the guillotine, deliberately perpetrated with the mockery

* Carnôt himself, admitting always Robespierre to have been exceedingly bad, said there were two a good deal worse, Billaud and Collot.

of justice, under her outraged form, and in her profaned name.

In these horrid scenes the enemies of Carnôt have, of course, endeavoured to implicate him; and it is not to be denied that many impartial observers have formed an opinion condemnatory of his conduct. That he remained in office with such detestable men as his colleagues; that he was aware of all their proceedings; that he even signed the orders of execution in his turn, complying with the regulation already mentioned; that he thus made himself legally responsible for all those atrocious acts of absolute power cruelly exercised—is not to be questioned, and no one can venture to hold with entire confidence the opinion that this responsibility did not extend much further, and involve him in the actual and enormous guilt of deeds which, at all events, and from whatever motive, he sanctioned by his participation, leaving mankind to infer, from his silence, that they had his approval. Yet his position, and that of his country, must be well considered before we pass so severe a censure upon his conduct. He began to administer the war department, had made some progress in his functions, and had gained brilliant successes, before his colleagues commenced their reign of terror. His defence is, that, had he yielded to the natural feelings of abhorrence, and followed his own inclinations, the country was conquered, possibly partitioned—far worse injury inflicted upon his fellow-citizens—far more blood split—far more lasting disgrace incurred by the nation—far more permanent disasters entailed upon all classes of the people—than all that the terrorist executions and confiscations could produce. Had he any right, then, to refuse his aid, thus required for averting such calamities? Was it not enough for him to know that his retirement would certainly not have stayed the proscription, while it most probably would have opened the gate of Paris to the Allies? Was it not sufficient for his conscience that he felt wholly innocent of the crimes perpetrated by his colleagues? And, knowing his character to be above reproach, had he a right to sacrifice

his country to a regard for his reputation? This question he could answer in those memorable words of Danton—" *Périsset ma réputation plutôt que ma patrie.*"

But it may be urged that such passages, such elections, are of dangerous example, *decipit exemplar vitiis imitabile*; and also, that the defence assumes the fact, both of his having constantly disapproved of the proceedings of Terror, and of his having adhered to the government of the Terrorists from no sinister motive. To the first objection it would not be easy to return a satisfactory answer, unless by urging the extremity of the case in which he was called upon to make his election, and the prodigious magnitude of the evils between which he had to choose. Nor will any one be convinced by such considerations who is inclined to hold that, in questions of blood-guiltiness, we are forbidden to regard any consequences, and bound each to keep his own hands at all events pure. It may, however, be well to reflect, that many persons are parties to crimes, such as the waging of unjust and murderous wars, nay, even to the oppression and ruin of individuals by measures of state, and yet escape censure, upon no other ground than that they confine their exertions to their own department, leaving the whole blame to rest upon the guilty actors; and if it should be said that Carnôt's withdrawing his sanction from the proscriptions might have arrested the course of his blood-thirsty colleagues, it is at the least equally sure that, if all who disapproved of an unjust war refused to play their parts in it—if generals and officers and soldiers withheld their concurrence—no statesman, be he ever so wicked or ever so powerful, could cover the face of the earth with the slaughter and fire and pillage of war.

But the question of fact is easily and satisfactorily answered; for we are possessed of evidence which acquits him of all participation in the crimes of the day, and also of circumstances in his history which serve as a test of his motives in continuing to direct the military operations while Robespierre presided over the internal policy of the state. The arrangement of the

committee in departments to which reference has been made is established in the written protest previously drawn up by Robert Lindet for his own exculpation. Carnôt's name being affixed without any knowledge even of the lists, and as a mere form, seems proved by the accidental circumstance of his having signed the warrant for the arrest of his confidential secretary, this happening to be issued by Robespierre in the week when it was Carnôt's turn to sign. On some occasions he assisted at the police sittings of the committee, and then he is represented by the royalist authors themselves as having "saved more lives than all that his colleagues sacrificed." The hatred of his colleagues and their constant threats of vengeance are well known. It was his keeping aloof from all participation in the bloody orgies of their councils; his openly reprobating their proceedings; his fearlessly blaming the destruction of the Brissotines in particular; that made the fanatical St. Just charge him with moderantism, and insist upon his being tried for the offence; that made Robespierre, in lamenting the necessity of having him among their number as the consequence of his own ignorance of military affairs, call him, with unspeakable bitterness of spirit, "L'odieux Carnôt." Nay, we have it from Carnôt himself, that Robespierre's answer to the constant requisitions made for his destruction was in these words:—"Dans ce moment l'on ne pourrait pas se passer de lui; mais attendez jusqu'à ce qu'il ne nous soit plus indispensable, ou bien jusque nos armées subissent quelque revers—et alors sa tête tombera; je vous en reponds."*

It is fair, too, that we should regard the rest of his conduct, in order to have a test of the purity of his motives in this greatest exigency. Not only did he always set himself against anything like party or the acquisition of personal influence; not only did he constantly refuse, and at the daily risk of his life, even to enter the door of the Jacobin or any other Club; but we

* Robespierre's words, as repeated by General Carnôt himself to the writer of these pages, in 1814.

know that his courage was displayed in nobly doing his duty, utterly careless of consequences, where these could only affect himself. In June 1792 he exposed himself to the furious resentment of the army by declaring in his report the massacre of Dillon and Beaugeand to be the "acts of Cannibals." As often as any matter was referred to his investigation, his reports were made without the least regard to their either displeasing the people, injuring the progress of his principles, or exasperating the government against him; and when he received orders, though in a subordinate capacity, to do anything of which he strongly disapproved, he fearlessly encountered the risk of his head by a peremptory refusal; as when he refused to arrest an unpopular general, while acting as deputy with the army of the north. He who could cite such acts of moral courage, as performed in such times, might well challenge credit for being influenced by no sense of personal danger, or any other unworthy motive, in adhering to the Terrorists while their power was at its height.

It is worthy of remark how entirely those who most condemn Carnôt for the compliances now under discussion have forgotten the conduct of others who have sanctioned as great crimes without any portion of his excuse. No one more loudly blamed him, for example, than Talleyrand, and yet Talleyrand continued the principal minister, not only of Napoleon, during his Spanish, Swiss, and Russian wars,* but of the

* The comparison of these wars to the judicial murders of Paris may seem unjust towards the former. But, although the glory of war encircles its horrible atrocities with a false glare which deceives us as to its blood-guiltiness, in what does the crime of Napoleon, when he sacrificed thousands of lives to his lust of foreign conquest, differ from that of Robespierre when he sought domestic power by slaying hundreds of his fellow-citizens? In one particular there is more atrocity in the crimes of the latter; they were perpetrated under the name and form of justice, whose sanctity they cruelly profaned; but, on the other hand, far more blood was spilt, far more wide-spreading and lengthened misery occasioned to unoffending provinces, by the invasions of Spain, and Switzerland, and Russia, than by all the acts of the committee, the convention and

Executive Directory, during the proscription of Fructidor, when sixty-three deputies and thirteen journalists were arrested in their beds, carried through the provinces in cages like wild beasts amidst the revilings of the infuriated mob, and crowded into the hold of a convict-ship to perish miserably in the swamps of Guiana.*

In these reflections no reference has been made to the private character of Carnôt, his unsullied purity in all the relations of private life, and the incorruptible integrity of his public administration, as far as money was concerned. The reason of this omission is obvious. Although the private reputation of some Terrorists was almost as much tarnished as their public conduct, it is certain that others, perhaps the greater number, and among them certainly Robespierre, were of irreproachable lives. As to corruption, it was imputable to few or none of them;† indeed the generally-received phrase was that they had all vices saving this. The men who had, unwatched, the distribution of the whole revenues of

the revolutionary tribunal. Nor will mankind ever be free from the scourge of war until they learn to call things by their proper names, to give crimes the same epithets, whatever outward form they may assume, and to regard with equal abhorrence the conqueror who slakes his thirst of dominion with the blood of his fellow-creatures, and the more vulgar criminal, who is executed for taking the life of a wayfaring man that he may seize upon his purse.

* It deserves to be remarked that the virtuous Lafayette, whose memoirs and correspondence have been given to the world by his family, although he often makes mention of Carnôt, and held in more abhorrence than perhaps any other man the whole reign of terror, his hatred of which was indeed the cause of all his own misfortunes, yet never speaks disparagingly of the great minister; on the contrary, whenever he can find an opportunity, his tone is apologetic; and in one passage, particularly, he expressly says that the committee of public safety only had the use of his name, not the disposal of his person. — (See tome iv., pp. 334, 335; and v. pp. 110, 217.)

† Danton was not a member of the committee of public safety. He was known to be sold to the court. His price was 90,000f., paid, and promises of more. Montmorin (whose execution he caused) had his receipt for the money. Yet did this wretch come to the bar and demand Lafayette's head for the king's escape!

France, distributed among themselves monthly the sum of 360 francs for all their expenses; and when Robespierre was put to death the whole property found in his possession was thirty-six of the last supply that issued to him.* Carnôt, in like manner, never received a farthing of the public money for his official services; but, in a different respect, his singular disinterestedness was truly striking; it was peculiar to himself, and it proved to demonstration how entirely every selfish feeling was absorbed in his zeal for the public service. Though at the head of all military affairs, he never received his own promotion in the army more rapidly than the most friendless subaltern. He was only a lieutenant when he came into office. He was but a captain while directing the operations of fourteen armies, and bestowing all ranks, all commands, upon his brother officers. It was not till the latter part of his Directorship that he became colonel, and he remained colonel only while king of the country. These passages may well be cited as throwing a strong light upon the purity of his motives, when his conduct is equivocal, and the facts are referrible to either good motives or bad. They seem quite enough to prove that when he went wrong the error was one of the judgment and not of the heart.

But, if a considerable difference of opinion exists, and ever will divide men's minds, upon the moral character of Carnôt, upon his genius for affairs there can be none at all. The crisis was truly appalling when he undertook the military administration of the Republic. The remains of Dumourier's army were chased from post to post; Valenciennes, Mentz, Condê, had fallen; two Spanish armies attacked the line of the Pyrennees; another invasion was advancing from Piedmont on that of the Alps; La Vendée was in the hands of the rebels who threatened the capital itself of the province at the head of 40,000 armed peasantry, of all troops the most formidable in such a country; Marseilles and Lyons had sepa-

* These simple republicans divided their monthly allowances into rouleaus of 12f., being their daily expenditure: and three of these unexpended, were found in Robespierre's desk.

rated themselves by force from the Republican government; and an English fleet rode in the harbour of Toulon. Every one knows how swiftly this scene was reversed, the enemy on all points driven back, offensive operations resumed, the neighbouring countries subjugated, and the terrible Republic installed as the conqueror of Europe, instead of expecting her fate at the hands of a hundred foes. In less than a year and a half of this unparalleled administration, the brilliant results of the campaign were 27 victories, 8 of them in pitched battles; 120 actions of lesser moment; 116 regular fortresses or great towns taken, 36 of them after regular sieges, and 230 lesser forts carried; 83,000 of the enemy slain, 91,000 made prisoners, 3,800 cannon, 70,000 muskets, and 90 colors captured. These marvels are known to the world, and on these the splendid fame of this great man rests. But it is not so well known that he conducted alone the whole correspondence of fourteen armies; that wherever he could not repose absolute confidence in his general, he gave his detailed instructions from Paris; that from time to time he repaired to the spot, and that his orders were followed, or informed himself how they should be modified, sometimes making the circuit of five or six armies during one tour of inspection; and that, where the fortune of a battle was that of the nation, as at Wattignies, and his taking the field in person could turn the fate of the day, he put himself, in his civic dress, at the head of the troops, and, after performing prodigies of valour, gained a decisive victory, and saved the capital itself. In the whole history of war and of administration there is perhaps no second instance of anything like his instructions to Pichegru for the campaign of 1794. Hardly a battle was fought, or a place masked, or a siege formed, or a corps posted, that these orders did not previously designate and arrange; nor does the narrative of that victorious campaign differ from the previous order for conducting it, except in the tense of the verbs employed, and in the filling up a few names of the more obscure places, or the less important affairs.

It remains to apply the severest and the surest of all tests to his brilliant career, the value of the men whom he promoted, and by whom he was served. Hoche's merit he at once discovered while a serjeant of foot, from a plan of operations which he had given in. Bonaparte himself was placed by him at the head of the great army of Italy, while wholly unknown by any achievement, except by the genius which he showed at Paris in his dispositions for fighting the battle of the sections. He was then a young man of five-and-twenty, and had never shown any talent in regular war except on a very small scale at the siege of Toulon. Carnôt, without any hesitation, after observing his conduct at Paris, gave him the chief command of the republic's most important and difficult campaign, against the whole force of Austria and Italy. It might suit the Emperor's views afterwards to forget the obligation which he owed, and to seek a poor justification of his ingratitude in attempting to undervalue his patron, of whose military administration he often spoke slightly to his courtiers. But a letter now lies before us, dated 10 Floreal, An. 4 (June, 1796), from his headquarters at Cherasco, after the battles of Lodi and Arcola, in which he tells Carnôt, then director, and again at the head of the war department, that the treaty of Sardinia enables him to receive communications through Turin in half the time of the longer route, and adds, "Je pourrais donc recevoir promptement vos ordres et connaître vos intentions pour la direction à donner à l'armée;" and in a former letter to the finance minister, he had said "that with the command of the army he had received a plan of offensive war prescribed to him, and the execution of which required prompt measures and extraordinary funds." A despatch of Carnôt's is also before us of a somewhat earlier date, chalking out generally the plan of operations; generally, no doubt; for the great director well knew when to tie down his instruments by special instructions, and when to leave a large latitude to those who deserved and obtained his entire confidence.

It is unnecessary to add that the other generals, at

the same time employed to carry the French flag in triumph over Europe, were also men of first-rate military capacity—Massena, Joubert, Lannes, Moreau. Nor ought we to forget that the resources of all other sciences were brought by the War Minister to bear upon the military art; that by him chemistry, geodesy, mechanics, aërostation itself, were laid under contribution for the benefit of the tactician; that, above all, the foundations were laid of that magnificent system of Public Education so invaluable for all the departments of the state, the Polytechnic School, one of the most glorious monuments of the spirit of improvement that have survived the changes of both Revolution and Restoration.

When Carnôt quitted the Committee of Public Safety in the latter part of 1794, the confidence of his countrymen was signally manifested towards him. No fewer than fourteen places chose him at once for their representative in the Council of Five Hundred. In 1795 he accepted the place of Director and the Administration of the War Department, at a moment of almost as great public disaster as when he first came into the executive government two years before. Had any selfish feeling ever found a place in his bosom—above all, had personal vanity been its inmate—he would have held aloof at this crisis of affairs, left the new constitution to work its way, and let the world believe that, as disaster had succeeded to victory when he quitted the government, so all the military glory of France was bound up in his ministry. But he scorned all personal feelings; he knew only the motives of a statesman, harboured only the sentiments of a patriot, acknowledged only the claims of his country. At once he obeyed her summons, and in a few weeks victory again resorted to her standard.

So brilliant a career was destined to a premature close. It is believed by most observers, that at every period of the Revolution the great majority of the French people, except in the capital, were adverse to republican principles;* and the elections of 1797, the first that were

* The saying of Barrere is well-known: “Il y a une république —il n’y a pas de républicains.” Soulavie, formerly a member of

held under the new constitution, returned a majority of Royalists and moderate Reformers to the councils. The first acts of the new representatives showed for what they were prepared. A noted Royalist was elected, in the person of Pichegru, President of the Five Hundred ; and counter-revolutionary propositions were openly discussed in that assembly. The majority of the Directory formed their determination with promptitude ; and resolved upon an act of violence (*coup d'état*) for which they found a precedent in the history of Oliver Cromwell, who had purged the Parliament of all doubtful members by a military force stationed at the door. To this proposition Carnôt, however he might lament the unfavourable aspect of the new majority, steadily refused his consent. As soon as he was aware of the intentions of his colleagues he might have secured himself and destroyed them by at once denouncing their plot to the councils. But he was far above all acts that even wore the semblance of treachery ; and he became the sacrifice to his unchangeable integrity. Proscribed with the party which he most disliked, and proscribed because he would not join in breaking the law to reach them and to destroy them, he narrowly escaped alive, and led the life of an exile from the country he had twice saved, until, after some years of disgrace, distraction, and defeat, the never-failing consequences of his quitting office, he was recalled by the revolution which destroyed the Directorial power and placed Napoleon upon the Consular throne.

In that retirement his favourite science was his constant resource. His mathematical studies, never wholly

the Gironde, boasted that his party, on the 10th of August, accomplished what was plainly "against the wishes of the country," *i. e.*, the destruction of monarchy, "with 3000 workmen." Petion declared that at that time there were only five republicans in all France. Collot d'Herbois and Merlin de Thionville, in an altercation with him, said, "Nous avons fait le dix d'Août sans vous, et nous allons faire la république contre vous." Nay, as late as 3d July, 1791, we find Merlin (Douay) himself speaking of the abolition of royalty with horror, as the synonyme of "une guerre civile affreuse," and arguing on the utter impossibility of forming a republic in an extensive country. (*Mem. de Lafayette*, iii. 383. *Lettre de Merlin*.)

abandoned, were resumed with all the zeal of his younger years, and the fruit of these worthy occupations was the composition of those works which give him so high a place among mathematicians. Even in an age when analytical methods have eclipsed the more beautiful, though far less powerful investigations of geometry, his *Géometrie de la Position* is justly admired for the singular elegance and unexpected generality of the theorems,* as well as the acuteness of many of its general doctrines.† His treatise on the principles of the different departments of Calculus is a masterly work, alike admirable for its clearness, its profound sagacity, and its happy illustrations. Nor can any writer be named who has so well described and explained the Calculus of Variations as he has done in that work. In these sublime researches this great patriot sought consolation amidst the misfortunes which the incapacity and the profligacy of his former colleagues, Barras and Rewbel, were daily bringing upon France; as far as any occupation that left him the power of reflecting upon passing events could yield him comfort, while he saw the fruits of his labours, the victories which he had gained for his country, torn from her—her independence once more threatened by foreign enemies—her bosom torn with intestine distractions—her territory desolated by the projects of counter-revolution.

From the return of Napoleon he expected the termination of those calamities, and, with all the friends of liberty, he hailed the elevation of the consul to power with patriotic delight. Under him he resumed his functions as war minister, but resigned them the moment he perceived that the consul harboured projects hostile to public liberty. His republican attachments were recorded in his votes against the consulship for life and the imperial title. He remained in a private state, devoted to scientific pursuits, until Napoleon's reverses and those of France seemed to call for all the

* Chap. VI.

† Disc. Prêlim.

help she could receive from every good citizen; and he then wrote that memorable letter, which, in a few simple words expressed at once his devotion to his country and his adherence to the principles of freedom. The concluding sentence is remarkable. After making a tender of his military services in modest terms, he adds—"Il est encore tems pour vous, Sire, de conquérir une paix glorieuse et de faire que l'amour du grand peuple vous soit rendu." The offer was at once accepted, and he was sent to defend Antwerp, where his military genius shone conspicuous, but was eclipsed by his tender care of the inhabitants; and they addressed to him, on his departure, a wish, at once simple and affecting, to possess in their great church some memorial of a governor so much respected and so dearly loved.

The last words that Napoleon addressed to him when he left Paris after the battle of Waterloo are remarkable, and they carry a memorable lesson to short-sighted, ambitious, and unprincipled men. "*Carnôt, je vous ai connu trop tard!*" Truly tyrants, and they who would play the tyrant's part, are the last to make acquaintance with the worth of such men as Carnôt. Far sweeter to their ear is the accent of flattery, the soft tone of assent and obeisance, than the stern, grating, hoarse sound of the independent voice, the honest and natural strains that convey wholesome truth, and threaten manly resistance to wicked schemes. Had the virtue of Washington found any place in Napoleon's bosom, the first man clasped to it would have been the inflexible republican, the indomitable patriot, the untameable lover of freedom, who regarded all his own glories, all his triumphs over the enemy, as nothing, unless they subdued the foes of liberty and of France. But he who only valued his victories as a ladder to the throne—who made no account of his laurels unless as they covered the fruit, the forbidden fruit, of arbitrary power—only followed the bent of his evil nature, in driving far from him an eye he durst not meet, a look which reproached him, and an arm whose

vengeance conscience told him he deserved to encounter. The stuff of which he would make his courtiers was far different from Carnôt's. His palace-gates flew open to the congenial spirits of courtly parasites, whom, be it spoken with respect as with shame, the National Institute contained within its body, who, by an unanimous vote,* as disgraceful as ever proceeded from even literary servility, erased Carnôt's name from their lists, when he was persecuted for refusing to violate the constitution, and with one voice elected Bonaparte in his stead.

The restoration, which was only consummated in 1815 after the second occupation of Paris, drove this

* It is fair here to note that there was the colour at least of a law for Carnôt's exclusion; because the directory had passed a decree, or forced it upon the legislature truncated by the act of violence just committed—and that decree declared all the persons proscribed to have forfeited their civil rights. Nevertheless, to regard such a mockery of law as binding on the Institute was unpardonable; and, at any rate, no human power could have obliged that body to fill up the vacancy, which it did by an unanimous and an immediate vote. In 1814 an attempt was made once more to exclude Carnôt at the restoration. M. Arago, then a very young man (only 26 years old), and by much the youngest member of the Institute, declared that he should resist by every means in his power the filling up such a vacancy, and thus prevented the crown from insisting upon Carnôt's exclusion. When this was, during the *cent jours*, told to Napoleon by the General himself, he was much struck with it, expressed himself in terms of great admiration, probably effected somewhat painfully upon his own very different conduct in consenting to be the successor of his patron 17 years before; but had the magnanimity nevertheless to bestow upon M. Arago the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour. The excellent and learned Niebuhr has recorded his admiration of Carnôt in striking language:—"He is in some points the greatest man of this century. His virtue is of an exalted kind. When he invents a new system of tactics, hastens to the army, teaches it how to conquer by means of them, and then returns to his government at Paris, he appears great indeed! While engaged in making plans for the operations of five armies, he wrote a mathematical work of the light character, and composed very agreeable little poems. He was a mighty genius! However I may differ from his political views, there is a republican greatness in him which commands respect. My love for him may be an anomaly; yet so it is. Had I nothing left in the wide world but a crust of bread, I would be proud of sharing it with Carnôt."

illustrious statesman and warrior a second time, and for the rest of his days, into exile—an exile far more honourable than any court favour, because it might have been averted by the suppleness and the time-serving so dear to princes, the abandonment of long-cherished principles, the sacrifice of deep-rooted opinions; those compliances, and that apostacy, which are more soothing to the royal taste, in proportion as they more tarnish the character, and are never so much relished as when the name is the most famous which they dishonour. Yet let it never be forgotten that princes are nurtured in falsehood by the atmosphere of lies which envelopes their palace; steeled against natural sympathies by the selfish natures of all that surround them; hardened in cruelty, partly indeed by the fears incident to their position, but partly too by the unfeeling creatures, the factitious, the unnatural productions of a court, whom alone they deal with; trained for tyrants by the prostration which they find in all the minds they come in contact with; encouraged to domineer by the unresisting medium through which all their steps to power and its abuse are made. It is not more true that the vulture is hatched by the parent bird from her egg in her blood-stained nest, than that the parasite courtier in the palace is the legitimate father of the tyrant.

Let not the page that records such deeds, such virtues, and such sacrifices as Carnôt's, and places in contrast with them the perfidy and the ingratitude which rewarded them, be read only as the amusement of a vacant hour, or to gratify the vulgar curiosity raised by a celebrated name. That page is fitted to convey a great moral lesson both to the potentates who vex mankind, and to the world whose weakness and whose baseness both perverts their nature to mischief, and arms it with the power of doing harm. While the tyrant is justly loathed—while rational men shall never cease to repeat the descriptive words, "*non ullum monstrum nec fœdus, nec tetrius, neque dîs hominibusque invisius terra genuit; qui quamquam formâ hominis, tamen immanitate morum vastissimas vincit belluas*"—while no excuse nor any

palliation for his crimes can ever be admitted from any consideration of other men's follies or vices—yet it is at the same time just, and it is also useful to bear perpetually in mind how impracticable would be all the schemes of despots, if the people were not the willing accomplices in their own subjection. Well indeed might Napoleon hope to subjugate France on his return, more easily than he ever hoped to conquer Egypt, when he observed that before he fared forth upon his adventurous expedition to the East, the greatest men whom science enrolled among her votaries were capable of the baseness which expelled from their academy one of its most brilliant members, only because to a scientific renown equal with their own he added the imperishable glory of being a martyr to the cause of law and justice! Well might the victorious soldier regard France as a country fated to be ruled with an iron rod, when he saw the whole people quail before three corrupt tyrants, and drive from their soil the illustrious patriot whose genius and whose valour had twice saved it from foreign conquest! Well might the Bourbons, whom Napoleon's mad ambition had replaced on the throne, verify the saying, that the worst of revolutions is a restoration, when the French people suffered them without a murmur to proscribe the author of all those victories which had made them famous throughout the world, leaving to die, in poverty and in exile, him whose genius had carried their banners triumphant over all Europe, and whose incorruptible integrity had suffered him to retire penniless from the uncontrolled distribution of millions! It was thus that Marlborough was driven for a season into banishment by the factious violence of the times acting upon a thoughtless and ungrateful people.* It is thus that the coarse abuse of

* It must, in justice to the French nation, be borne in mind, that France was then occupied by the foreign armies, and that the article of the Convention securing a general amnesty for all political offenders was violated in the person of Carnôt as well as of Ney, little to the credit of any party concerned, whether actively or passively. Let it be recorded to the eternal honour of the Prussian government, that at Magdeburgh, where the illustrious exile passed his latter days, the soldiers had orders to salute him as often as he

Wellington is, in our day, the favourite topic with millions of his countrymen, under the absolute domination of those priests and demagogues whom they suffer to think for them, and whom they follow blindly, without ever exercising any will of their own more than if Providence had not endowed them with reason. But the people of all countries may be well assured that, as long as they become the willing instruments, the effective accomplices* of royal crimes, or of sordid and unprincipled incendiaries, by remaining the passive spectators of such guilt, they never will be without the curse of despots—at one time crouching beneath the infliction of some hereditary scourge—at another betrayed by some more splendid military usurper—or both betrayed, and sold, and enthralled by a succession of vulgar tyrants.†

appeared in the streets. It is a similar homage to science and letters—to his own natural enemy, the press—that the Prussian despotism pays in making its soldiers salute the statue of Guttenburg, in the towns of Westphalia.

* A truly disgusting anecdote is recorded in the memoirs of Lafayette published by his family. The Emperor Alexander positively assured the venerable republican that he had done all he could to prevent the extreme counter-revolutionary aspect of the arrangement at the Restoration, and, among other things, to make the King give up his favourite date of the reign—from 1793, but that the servility of the Corps Legislatif, who came with addresses of absolute submission, silenced him. The Emperor spoke with as much scorn of their baseness as he did of the incorrigible obstinacy of the Bourbons, whom he declared, with the exception of the Duke of Orleans (Louis Philippe), as “incorrigês, et incorrigibles.” These vile deputies doubtless had thought to gain the Emperor’s favour as much as Louis XVIII. did. It should be a warning to courtiers and apostates from the cause of the people, when they see how little princes respect or thank them for the meanest compliances. (Mem. vol. v., p. 311.)

† The reader of this account of General Carnôt will recognise the service rendered to the author by M. Arago’s admirable Eloge of that great man when it shall be published. He has been favoured with the perusal of it by the kindness of his much-esteemed colleague.

LAFAYETTE.

GREATLY inferior in capacity to Carnôt, but of integrity as firm, tempered by milder affections, and of as entire devotion to the principles of liberty, was the eminent and amiable person whose name heads this page; and it is a remarkable circumstance that the predominating gentleness of his nature supplying the want of more hardy qualities, afforded him the power of resisting those with whom he was co-operating, when they left the right path and sullied the républican banner by their excesses—a power in which the more stern frame of Carnôt's mind was found deficient. For it was the great and the rare praise of Lafayette—a praise hardly shared by him with any other revolutionary chief—that he both bore a forward part in the scenes of two Revolutions, and refused steadily to move one step farther in either than his principles justified, or his conscientious opinion of the public good allowed.

In another particular he presents a singular and a romantic example of devotion to the cause of liberty when his own country was not concerned, and his station, his interest, nay, his personal safety, were strongly opposed to the sacrifice. A young nobleman, nearly connected with the highest families in Europe, fitted by his rank and by his personal qualities to be the ornament of the greatest court in the world, was seen to quit the splendid and luxurious circle in which he had just begun to shine, and, smitten with an uncontrollable enthusiasm for American freedom, to run the gauntlet of the police and the Bastille of France and the cruisers of England, that he might reach the transatlantic shores, and share the victories of the popular chiefs, or mingle his blood with theirs. His escape to the theatre of glory

was as difficult as if he had been flying from the scene of crimes. He withdrew in secret, travelled under a feigned name, hid himself under various disguises, hired a foreign vessel, escaped with extreme difficulty from the custom-house scrutiny, more than once narrowly missed capture on his passage, and was a proscribed man in his own country, until the chances of politics and of war threw its councils into the same course which he had thus individually anticipated.

The generous zeal which carried him into the New World was not his only recommendation to the affection and gratitude of its inhabitants. His gallantry in the field could only be exceeded by the uniform mildness and modesty of his whole demeanor. Ever ready to serve wherever he could be of most use; utterly regardless of the station in which he rendered his assistance, whether called to convey an order as an aide-de-camp, or to encourage the flagging valour of the troops by his chivalrous example, or to lead a force through multiplied difficulties, or even to signalise himself by the hardest feat in the art of war—commanding a retreat; never obtruding his counsels or his claims, but frankly tendering his opinion and seconding the pretensions of others rather than his own, with the weight of his merits and his name—he endeared himself to an army jealous of foreigners, by whom they had been much deceived, to a people remarkable for other qualities than delicacy of sentiment or quickness to acknowledge services rendered, and to a Chief whose great nature, if it had a defect, was somewhat saturnine, and little apt to bestow confidence, especially where disparity of years, as well as military rank, seemed almost to prescribe a more distant demeanor. The entire favour of this illustrious man, which he naturally prized above all other possessions and gloried in above all other honours, he repaid by a devotion which increased his claims to it. When, in the jealousy of party, attempts were made to undermine the General's power, and those who would have sacrificed their country to gratify their personal spleen or envy were seeking to detach the young Frenchman from his leader by the

offer of a command separate and independent of Washington, he at once refused to hold it, and declared that he would rather be the aide-de-camp of the General than accept any station which could give him umbrage for an instant.

In order to perceive the extent of the affection which Lafayette had inspired into the American people, we must transport ourselves from the earliest to the latest scenes of his life, and contemplate certainly the most touching spectacle of national feelings, and the most honourable to both parties, which is anywhere to be seen in the varied page of history. Half a century after the cause of Independence had first carried him across the Atlantic, the soldier of liberty in many climes, the martyr to principles that had made him more familiar with the dungeon than with the palace of which he was born an inmate, now grown gray in the service of mankind, once more crossed the sea to revisit the scenes of his earlier battles, the objects of his youthful ardour, the remains of his ancient friendships. In a country torn with a thousand factions, the voice of party was instantaneously hushed. From twelve millions of people the accents of joy and gratulation at once burst forth, repeated through the countless cities that stud their vast territory, echoed through their unbounded savannahs and eternal forests. It was the gratitude of the whole nation, graven on their hearts in characters that could not be effaced, transmitted with their blood from parent to child, and seeking a vent, impetuous and uncontrolled, wherever its object, the general benefactor and friend, appeared. Nothing but the miracle which should have restored Washington from the grave could have drawn forth such a rapturous and such an universal expression of respect, esteem, and affection, as the reappearance amongst them of his favourite companion in arms, whose earliest years had been generously devoted to their service. The delicacy of their whole proceedings was as remarkable as the unanimity and the ardour which the people displayed. There was neither the doubtful vulgarity of natural coarseness, nor the un-

questionable vulgarity of selfish affectation, to offend the most fastidious taste. All was rational and refined. The constituted authorities answered to the people's voice—the Legislature itself received the nation's guest in the bosom of the people's representatives, to which he could not by law have access—he was hailed and thanked as the benefactor and ally of the New World—and her gratitude was testified in munificent grants of a portion of the territory which he had helped to save. If there be those who can compare this grand manifestation of national feeling, entertained upon reasonable grounds and worthy of rational men, with the exhibitions of loyalty which have occasionally been made in England, and not feel somewhat humiliated by the contrast, they must, indeed, have strange notions of what becomes a manly and reflecting people.

The part which Lafayette bore in the revolutions of his own country was of far greater importance; and as it was played in circumstances of incomparably greater difficulty, so it will unavoidably give rise to a much greater diversity of opinion among those who judge upon its merits. In America, the only qualities required for gaining him the love and confidence of the people whom he had come to serve, were the gallantry of a chivalrous young man, the ingenuous frankness of his nature and his age, and his modest observance of their great chief. To these he added more than a fair share of talents for military affairs, and never committed a single error, either of judgment or temper, that could ruffle the current of public opinion which set so strongly in towards him, from the admiration of his generous enthusiasm for the independent cause. Above all, no crisis ever arose in American affairs which could make the choice of his course a matter of the least doubt. Washington was his polar star, and to steer by that steady light was to pursue the path of the purest virtue, the most consummate wisdom. In France, the scene was widely different. Far from having a single point in controversy, like the champions of separation in the

New World, the revolutionists of the Old had let loose the whole questions involved in the structure of the social system. Instead of one great tie being torn asunder, that which knit the colony to the parent state, while all other parts of the system were left untouched and unquestioned, in France the whole foundations of government, nay, of society itself, were laid bare, every stone that lay on another shaken, and all the superstructure taken to pieces, that it might be built up anew, on a different plan, if not on a different basis. To do this mighty work, the nation, far from having one leader of prominent authority, split itself into numberless factions, each claiming the preponderancy, and even in every faction there seemed almost as many leaders as partizans. A whole people had broke loose from all restraint; and while the difficulty and embarrassment of these mighty intestine commotions would have been above the reach of any wisdom and the control of any firmness, had they raged alone, it was incalculably aggravated and complicated by the menacing attitude which all Europe assumed towards the new order of things, portending a war from the beginning, and very soon issuing in actual and formidable hostilities. Such was the scene into which Lafayette found himself flung, with the feeble aid of his American experience, about as likely to qualify him for successfully performing his part in it, as the experience of a village school-master, or a small hand-steward may be fitted to accomplish the ruler of a kingdom. This diversity, however, he was far from perceiving, and it is even doubtful if to the last he had discovered it. Hence his views were often narrow and contracted to an amazing degree: he could not comprehend how things which had succeeded in the councils of America should fail with the mob of Paris. He seems never to have been aware of the dangers of violence, which are as inseparably connected with all revolution as heat is with fire or motion with explosion. His calculations were made on a system which took no account of the agents that were to work it. His mechanism was formed on a

theory that left out all consideration of the materials it was composed of—far more of their friction or of the air's resistance; and when it stuck fast on the first movement, or broke to pieces on the least stroke, he stood aghast, as if the laws of nature had been suspended, when it was only that the artist had never taken the trouble of consulting them. These remarks are peculiarly applicable to his conduct at the first two crises, one of which loosened his connection with the revolution, and the other broke it off—the violent measures of the 20th of June, 1792, when he seems, for the first time, to have conceived it possible that a constitution, six months old, should be violated by the multitudes who had made it in a few weeks—and the events of the famous 10th of August, which astonished him, but no one else, with the spectacle of a monarchy stripped of all substantive strength, overthrown by the tempest in a soil where it had no root, and giving place to a republic, the natural produce of the season and the ground.

Enamoured with that liberty for which he had fought and bled in America, no sooner did the troubles break out in France than Lafayette plunged at once into the revolutionary party, and declared himself for the change. The violences that attended the 14th of July he seemed to have laid upon the resistance made by the court; and was nothing scared even by the subsequent proceedings, which, though accompanied by no violence, yet inevitably led to the scenes of tumult that ensued. His error—nor is he the only deluded politician, nor his the only times rank with such delusions—his error, his grievous error, was to take no alarm at any measures that could be propounded, so they were adopted in present peace, and to regard all proceedings as harmless which were clothed with the forms of law. The cloud in the horizon he saw not, because it was of the size of a man's hand; but, indeed, he looked not out for it, because it was afar off; so when the tempest roared he was unprepared, and said, "I bargained not for this." To

no one more fitly than to him could be administered the rebuke, “*Les révolutions ne se font pas à l’eau de rose* ;” for their necessary connection with blood seems never to have struck him. Of Mr. Burke’s wiser views he entertained a supreme contempt; and it is a truly marvellous thing that the commander-in-chief of the National Guard, forty thousand strong—held together by no martial law—restrained by no pay—deliberating habitually with arms in their hands—acting one part at clubs or in the streets in the evening when dismissed from the parade, and another when called out—should never have dreamt of the contagious nature of tumultuary feelings and anarchical principles; and even after he had been compelled to resign the command on account of disorders committed by them, and only could be prevailed upon to resume it by their swearing to abstain for the future from such excesses, should have expected such an anomalous force to continue tractable as peace-officers, and to maintain the rigorous discipline of practised troops, untainted by the surrounding license of all classes. There certainly must be admitted to have been more than the share of simplicity (*bonhomie*) with which men who had gone through a revolution on both sides of the Atlantic might be supposed endowed, in a person of mature age, as well as large experience, being altogether confounded at the 20th of June and 10th of August, and abjuring all connection with a scheme of change which was found capable of producing disorder.

It is one thing to partake of the atrocities which so revolted him, or even to defend them; it is another to be so scared with events very far from being unforeseen, further still from being out of the course of things in time of change, as to abjure the cause which those atrocities deformed foully, obstructed greatly, but could not alter in its essence and nature. It assuredly behoves all men to meditate deeply before they embark in a course which almost inevitably leads to the committing of popular excesses, and which may by no remote probability be attended with the perpetration of the most flagrant

crimes, since it may become their duty not to leave the cause which they have espoused, merely because it has been tarnished by much of which they honestly disapprove. Although Lafayette never for a moment joined the enemy; although, even at the last moment of his command upon the frontier, and when he was placing himself in open hostility to the government of Paris, he continued to take all possible precautions against a surprise by the Austrian army; and although after his flight from France he rather endured a long and cruel captivity at the constant hazard of his life than lend even the countenance of a single phrase to the cause of the despots leagued against the liberties of his country; yet must it be confessed that his quitting the troops under his orders exposed, and of necessity exposed, the French territory to the most imminent perils, and that his quitting France was a severe blow both to the cause of the Republic and to the national security. True, his devotion was to that cause, and his desertion was in abhorrence of the outrages committed in its name by wicked men. But then it is equally true that he had been placed in his position by his own free consent, not drawn into it with his eyes shut, and that this position made it quite impossible to oppose the wrongs done by pretended republicans and to fly from the scene of offences, without also damaging the cause of republican government and shaking the very existence of France as an independent state.

But if Lafayette's mistake was great, through the whole of the critical times in which he acted so eminent a part, his integrity was unimpeached, his reputation unsullied, his consistency unbroken. Having laid down to himself the rule, so safe for virtue, but which would keep good men at a distance from all revolutionary movements—never to hold any fellowship with crime, even for the salvation of the country—never to do, or to suffer, or so much as to witness, evil that good may come, even the supreme good of the public safety—by that rule he uniformly held from the taking of the Bastille down to the excesses of

June 1792, and from thence till he quitted in August the soil tarnished with the overthrow of the law and the constitution. To the court, when it would encroach upon the rights of the nation—to the people, when they would infringe the prerogative of the crown—he alike presented a manful and uncompromising resistance. The delusion of the royal family prevented them from perceiving his inflexible honesty, and they alone doubted his title to their entire confidence. Blinded by groundless expectations that he would take part against the Revolution; judging his honesty by their own, and fancying his zeal for liberty was affected; flattering themselves, in utter oblivion of his whole previous history, that he was an aristocrat, a royalist, nay, an absolutist at heart, and that the patrician volunteer for American freedom would stand by his order when the crisis arrived, their disappointment at finding him more honest than they had believed was truly princely; for nothing is more implacable than a sovereign when he finds his calculations of human baseness frustrated by virtue being unexpectedly found where it was little expected. The ingratitude of the court was in the proportion of this disappointment. All the great citizen's services to the royal family, whose lives he repeatedly had saved at the risk of his own popularity, if not of his personal safety, were forgotten. His resigning the command of sixty battalions of national guards, because a handful of them had joined in insulting the King, went for nothing. While the corrupt Danton, who had sold himself and given his receipt for the price, was trusted; while the utmost grief was shown at the death of the venal Mirabeau, because he too had been bought; the King and Queen, in their letters to the Count d'Artois, then an emigrant at Coblenz, described Lafayette as a "scélérat et fanatique," whom no one could confide in, simply because no one could bribe him from his duty; and the wise Count expressed his lively satisfaction at finding the reports groundless of his relatives reposing any trust in one over whom

“avarice gave no hold, as in Mirabeau’s case; one who was a mere madman and enthusiast.” Even when Lafayette hurried to Paris from his head-quarters on the frontier, in order to repress the outrages of June 1792, all pointed against the royal family, the Queen said, “It was better to perish than owe their safety to Lafayette and the constitutional party;” and Mr. Windham, with a degree of thoughtlessness only to be explained by the frenzy of his anti-Gallican feelings and his devotion to Mr. Burke, cited the same royal authority as decisive against Lafayette, she having been heard to say, “I will place myself between Barnave and the executioner, but Lafayette I never can forgive.” How touching is the admission of this unhappy princess’s daughter, the Duchess d’Angoulême, on this subject, and how well does it express the error into which her parents had fallen! “Si ma mère eût pu vaincre ses préventions contre M. de Lafayette, si on lui eût accordé plus de confiance, mes malheureux parens vivraient encore!” This distrust of the General is thus laid, and on the highest authority, on the Queen. But no one can doubt that a principal ground of it in her mind was the conviction that he never would lend himself to her intrigues—to such faithless proceedings as that which was the main cause of Louis’s fate and her own, the flight to Varennes and the declaration left behind revoking all the promises previously made, and affirming that they had been extorted by force.

For this mistrust it is far more than a recompense that it was confined to the Court of Versailles. Men of all parties join in testifying their absolute belief in Lafayette’s inflexible integrity; and men of more than ordinary sagacity and reflection have added that he alone passed unscathed through the revolutionary furnace, alone trod without a fall the slippery path of those changeful scenes.—“La réflexion,” says Mr. Fox, in a letter on his release, “que vous êtes presque tout seul en droit de faire d’avoir joué un rôle dans ce qui s’est passé en France sans avoir rien à vous reprocher, doit être bien consolante.”—“Tenez, mon cher,” said Napoleon to him when

exceedingly hurt by his consistent refusal to support his arbitrary government, “une belle conduite, c’est la vôtre ! Mener les affaires de son pays, et en cas de naufrage n’avoir rien de commun avec ses ennemis, voilà ce qu’il faut.”

The inextinguishable hatred of despots is however his best panegyric. No sooner had he quitted his command, and passed into the Prussian territory on his way to a neutral country, than he was seized by the allied army ; and, when he refused all offers of joining them against his country, nay, would not open his mouth to give the least information which could aid their schemes of invasion, he and his companions, Latour Maubourg, and Bureaux-Pusy, were cast into a noisome dungeon at Wezel, where, for three months, rigorously separated from each other, they had each a sentinel day and night in his cell. Thence they were transferred, for a year, to Magdeburgh, and confined in damp holes, of five paces long by three broad. The remaining portion of their five years’ confinement was spent in a similar dungeon at Olmutz ; and to such a pitch of rigour was the imprisonment carried, that, when his sufferings brought Lafayette apparently to his death-bed, and he desired to see one of his companions in misery, the permission to receive his last sigh was peremptorily refused. After five years of solitary confinement, such as felons who had committed the greatest crimes could alone by law be made to undergo, these patriots, who were not even prisoners of war, who were seized and detained in utter violation of the law of nations, whose only offence was their having devoted themselves to the cause of freedom in reforming the institutions of their own country, and having abandoned their coadjutors when these combined outrage with reform, were at length liberated by the influence of the victorious Republic at the courts of the princes whom her arms had subdued. Then there walked forth from the darkness of their noisome dungeons victims of tyranny, grown gray with suffering, not with years, and old before their time, to deplore the

loss of so many of the best days of their lives, and to bear about for the residue of their existence the maladies which their maltreatment had engendered. Let such passages as this be borne in mind when men inveigh against the crimes of the people. The summary vengeance that terminates a victim's life is not always more harsh than the infliction of such torments as these ; and the cruelty thus for years perpetrated on men, the martyrs of liberty, merely because they would not be sold to their country's enemies, has at least this feature, more hateful than any that marks the excesses of popular fury : it is cold-blooded, it is deliberate, and never can plead in its justification the uncontrollable force of sudden excitement.

The, perhaps, over-scrupulous nature of Lafayette having led him immediately on his liberation to express his strong disapproval of the *coup d'état*, or revolution which expelled Carnôt and Barthelemy from the Directory, he remained abroad until the return of Bonaparte from Egypt and the establishment of the Consulship. True to his principles, he again was found refusing all fellowship with him whom he already perceived to have the propensities and to be compassing the purposes of a despot. He remained in seclusion, living in the bosom of his family, till the fall of the Imperial dynasty, and then during the first Restoration, with the proceedings of which he was still less satisfied than with the Empire. At length, when the second entry of the allies, after the battle of Waterloo, gave him a voice in public affairs, it was exerted to occasion Napoleon's abdication, with the senseless and extravagant view of proclaiming the King of Rome Emperor, with a Regency, a project which, in the mind of every man endowed with common understanding, meant the second restoration of the Bourbons. This event accordingly instantly followed, and the pedantry of Lafayette must bear much of the blame due to that event, and the final expulsion of Napoleon—a measure which he would be a bold man who should now defend as the best that could be adopted in the circumstances.

In 1830 we once more find him commanding the National Guards, and commanding too the respect and esteem of all his fellow-citizens. His well-known partiality for a republic again displayed itself; but, satisfied that no such thing was now possible in France, he declared himself for a "Monarchy surrounded with Republican Institutions." It is, perhaps, almost as certain a truth as can be well stated in political science, that to maintain a monarchy there must be a circumvallation of monarchical institutions. Nor is it easy to conceive how royalty can exist, unless in mere name, with a military force spread over the country having the choice of its own officers; with a Chamber of Peers possessing no substantive right whatever, nominated by the court and stripped of even moderate wealth; and with such a general concurrence of the people in the choice of their representatives as must exist if those are to represent the country in anything but the title they assume.

That the capacity of Lafayette was far less eminent than his virtues, we have already had frequent opportunity to remark. To eloquence he made no pretensions, but his written compositions are of great merit; clear, plain, sensible, often forcible in the expression of just sentiment and natural feeling, always marked with the sincerity so characteristic of the man. His conversation was unavoidably interesting, after all he had seen and had suffered; but his anecdotes of the American war and French revolution were given with a peculiar liveliness and grace, set off with a modesty and a candour alike attractive to the listener. He was extremely well informed upon most general subjects; had read history with care and discrimination; had treasured up the lessons of his own experience; was over-scrupulous in his applications of these to practice, somewhat apt to see all things through the medium of American views, generally forgetting the progress that men had made since 1777, and almost always ready to abandon what he was engaged in, if it could not be carried on precisely according to his own conscientious views of what was

prudent and right. But in private life he was faultless : kind, warm-hearted, mild, tolerant of all differences civil and religious, venerated in his family, beloved by his friends and respected even in his manifest errors by all with whom he ever held any intercourse. The appearance of such a personage at any time is of rare occurrence ; but by one whose life was spent in courts, in camps, in the turmoil of faction, the disturbances of civil war, in the extremities of revolutionary violence, it may well be deemed a wonder that such a character should be displayed even for a season, and little short of a miracle that such virtue should walk through such scenes untouched.

PRINCE TALLEYRAND.

AMONG the eminent men who figured in the eventful history of the French revolution, there has been more than one occasion for mentioning M. Talleyrand; and whether in that scene, or in any portion of modern annals, we shall in vain look for one who presents a more interesting subject of history. His whole story was marked with strange peculiarities, from the period of infancy to the latest scenes of a life protracted to extreme, but vigorous and undecayed, old age. Born to represent one of the most noble families in France, an accident struck him with incurable lameness; and the cruel habits of their pampered caste made his family add to this affliction the deprivation of his rank as eldest son. He was thus set aside for a brother whose faculties were far more crippled by nature than his own bodily frame had been by mischance; and was condemned to the ecclesiastical state, by way of at once providing for him and getting rid of him. A powerful house, however, could not find in Old France much difficulty in securing promotion in the church for one of its members, be his disposition towards its duties ever so reluctant, or his capacity for performing them ever so slender. The young Perigord was soon raised over the heads of numberless pious men and profound theologians, and became Bishop of Autun at an age when he had probably had little time for reflection upon his clerical functions, amidst the dissipations of the French capital, into which neither his personal misfortune, nor the domestic deposition occasioned by it, had prevented him from plunging with all the zeal of his strenuous and indomitable nature. His abilities were of the highest order; and the brilliancy with which they soon shone out was well calculated to secure him signal success in Parisian society, where his

rank would alone have gained him a high place, but where talents also, even in the humblest station, never failed to rise in the face of the aristocratic "genius of the place," and the habits of a nation of courtiers.

The great event of modern times now converted all Frenchmen into politicians—gave to state affairs the undisturbed monopoly of interest which the pleasures of society had before enjoyed—and armed political talents with the influence which the higher accomplishments of refined taste and elegant manners had hitherto possessed undivided and almost uncontrolled. M. Talleyrand did not long hesitate in choosing his part. He sided with the revolution party, and continued to act with them; joining those patriotic members of the clerical body who gave up their revenues to the demands of the country, and sacrificed their exclusive privileges to the rights of the community. But when the violence of the republican leaders, disdaining all bounds of prudence, or of justice, or of humanity, threatened to involve the whole country in anarchy and blood, he quitted the scene; and retired first to this country, where he passed a year or two, and then to America, where he remained until the more regular government of the executive directory tempered the violence of the revolution, and restored order to the State. Since that period he always filled the highest stations either at home or in the diplomatic service, except during a part of the restoration government, when the incurable folly of those princes, who, as he said himself, had come back from their long exile without having either learned or forgotten anything, deemed it prudent to lay upon the shelf the ablest and most experienced man in the country, that their councils might have the benefit of being swayed by the Polignacs and other imbecile creatures of their legitimate court.*

But it is from this constant employment of M. Talleyrand that the principal charge against the integrity of

* His resignation in 1815-16 was owing to the praiseworthy cause already stated; but the legitimate Bourbons never sought to draw him afterwards from his retirement.

his political character has been drawn. The chief minister and councillor of the Directory, he became suddenly the chief adviser of the Consular Government. When Napoleon took the whole power to himself, he continued his minister. When the independence of Switzerland was rudely invaded, he still presided over the department of Foreign Affairs. When the child and champion of Jacobinism had laid his parent prostrate in the dust, clothed himself with the Imperial purple, maltreated the Pope, and planted the iron crown of Italy on his brow, the republican ex-bishop remained in his service. When he who afterwards so eloquently avowed, that, "General, Consul, Emperor, he owed all to the people," studied to discharge that debt by trampling on every popular right, the advocate of freedom was still to be seen by his side, and holding the pen through which all the rescripts of despotic power flowed. When the adopted Frenchman, who, with the dying accents of the same powerful and racy eloquence, desired that "his ashes might repose near the stream of the Seine, in the bosom of the people whom he had so much loved," was testifying the warmth of his affection by such tokens as the merciless conscription, and breathing out his tenderness in proclamations of war that wrapped all France and all Europe in flame—the philosophic statesman—the friend of human improvement—the philanthropist who had speculated upon the nature of man, and the structure of government in both worlds, and had quitted his original profession because its claims were inimical to the progress of society—continued inseparably attached to the person of the military ruler, the warrior tyrant; and, although he constantly tendered sounder advice than ever was followed, never scrupled to be the executor of ordinances which he still most disapproved. The term of boundless, unreflecting, and miscalculating ambition was hastened by its excesses; Napoleon was defeated; foreign powers occupied France; and the Emperor's minister joined them to restore the Bourbons. With them he acted for some time, nor quitted them until they disclosed the self-destructive bent of their feeble

and unprincipled minds—to rule by tools incapable of any acts but those of sycophancy and prostration, and animated by no spirit but that of blind and furious bigotry. The overthrow of the dynasty once more brought M. Talleyrand upon the scene; and he has ever since been the most trusted, as the most valuable and skilful, of all the new government's advisers; nor have the wisdom and the firmness of any counsels, except indeed those of the monarch himself, contributed so signally to the successful administration of that great Prince, in the unparalleled difficulties of his truly arduous position.

That these well-known passages in M. Talleyrand's life indicate a disposition to be on the successful side, without any very nice regard to its real merits, can hardly be denied; and when facts, so pregnant with evidence, are before the reader, he has not merely materials for judging of the character to which they relate, but may almost be said to have had its lineaments presented to his view, without the aid of the historian's pencil to portray them. But the just discrimination of the historian is still wanting to complete the picture; both by filling up the outline, and by correcting it when hastily drawn from imperfect materials. Other passages of the life may be brought forward: explanations may be given of doubtful actions; apparent inconsistencies may be reconciled; and charges, which at first sight seemed correctly gathered from the facts, may be aggravated, extenuated, or repelled, by a more enlarged and a more judicial view of the whole subject. That the inferences fairly deduced from M. Talleyrand's public life can be wholly countervailed by any minuteness of examination, or explained away by any ingenuity of comment, it would be absurd to assert: yet it is only doing justice to comprise in our estimate of his merits some things not usually taken into the account by those who censure his conduct, and who pronounce him—merely upon the view of his having borne part in such opposite systems of policy, and acting with such various combinations of party—to have been a person singularly

void of public principle, and whose individual interest was always his god.

His conduct towards the caste he belonged to has been remarked upon with severity. But to that caste he owed only cruel and heartless oppression, and all for an accident that befell him in the cradle. He was not only disinherited, but he literally never was allowed to sleep under his father's roof. His demeanour, in respect to sacred matters, unbecoming his profession as a priest, has called down censures of a far graver description. But he was made by force to enter a profession which he abhorred; and upon those who forced him, not upon himself, falls the blame of his conduct having been unsuited to the cloth which they compelled him to wear. It, moreover, is true, but it has been always forgotten in the attacks upon his ecclesiastical character, that he gallantly undertook the defence of his sacred order, at a time when such devotion to a most unpopular body exposed him to destruction; and that he went into exile, leaving his fortune behind and subsisting when abroad upon the sale of his books, rather than be contaminated by any share whatever in the enormities of the first Revolution, is a circumstance equally true and equally kept in the shade by his traducer. When the dissipations of his earlier years are chronicled, no allusion is ever made to the severity of his studies at the Sorbonne, where he was only known as a young man of haughty demeanour and silent habits, who lived buried among his books. Unable to deny his wit, and overcome by the charms of his conversation, envious men have refused him even solid capacity, and the merit of having rendered more important services to society; but they have only been able to make this denial by forgetting the profound discourse upon Lotteries which laid the foundation of his fame; and the works upon Public Education, upon Weights and Measures, and upon Colonial Policy, which raised the superstructure. No mitigation of the judgment pronounced on his accommodating, or what has perhaps justly been called his time-serving, propensities has ever been effected by viewing the courage which

he showed in opposing Napoleon's Spanish war; the still more dangerous energy with which he defended the clerical body in his diocese at a time full of every kind of peril to political integrity; and his exclusion from power by the restored dynasty, whose return to the French throne was mainly the work of his hands, but whose service he quitted rather than concur in a policy humiliating to his country. Nor has any account been taken of the difficult state of affairs, and the imminent risk of hopeless anarchy on the one hand, or complete conquest on the other, to which France was exposed by the fortune of war, and the hazards of revolution;—an alternative presented to him in more than one of those most critical emergencies in which he was called to decide for his country as well as himself. Yet all these circumstances must be weighed together with the mere facts of his successive adhesion to so many governments, if we would avoid doing his memory the grossest injustice, and escape the most manifest error in that fair estimate of his political virtue which it should be our object to form.

But if the integrity of this famous personage be the subject of unavoidable controversy, and if our opinion regarding it must of necessity be clouded with some doubt, and at best be difficult satisfactorily to fix—upon the talents with which he was gifted, and his successful cultivation of them, there can be no question at all; and our view of them is unclouded and clear. His capacity was most vigorous and enlarged. Few men have ever been endowed with a stronger natural understanding; or have given it a more diligent culture, with a view to the pursuits in which he was to employ it. His singular acuteness could at once penetrate every subject; his clearness of perception at a glance unravelled all complications, and presented each matter distinct and unencumbered; his sound, plain, manly sense, at a blow got rid of all the husk, and pierced immediately to the kernel. A cloud of words was wholly thrown away upon him; he cared nothing for all the declamation in the world; ingenious topics, fine comparisons, cases in point, epi-

grammatic sentences, all passed innocuous over his head. So the storms of passion blew unheeded past one whose temper nothing could ruffle, and whose path towards his object nothing could obstruct. It was a lesson and a study, as well as a marvel, to see him disconcert, with a look of his keen eye, or a motion of his chin, a whole piece of wordy talk, and far-fetched and fine-spun argument, without condescending to utter, in the deep tones of his most powerful voice, so much as a word or an interjection;—far less to overthrow the flimsy structure with an irresistible remark, or consume it with a withering sarcasm. Whoever conversed with him, or saw him in conversation, at once learned both how dangerous a thing it was to indulge before him in loose prosing, or in false reasoning, or in frothy declamation; and how fatal an error he would commit who should take the veteran statesman's good-natured smile for an innocent insensibility to the ludicrous, and his apparently passive want of all effort for permanent indolence of mind. There are many living examples of persons not meanly gifted who, in the calm of his placid society, have been wrecked among such shoals as these.

But his political sagacity was above all his other great qualities; and it was derived from the natural perspicacity to which we have adverted, and that consummate knowledge of mankind—that swift and sure tact of character—into which his long and varied experience had matured the faculties of his manly, yet subtle understanding. If never to be deluded by foolish measures, nor ever to be deceived by cunning men, be among the highest perfections of the practical statesman, where shall we look for any one who preferred stronger claims to this character? But his statesmanship was of no vulgar cast. He despised the silly, the easy, and false old maxims which inculcate universal distrust, whether of unknown men or of novel measures, as much as he did the folly of those whose facility is an advertisement for impostors or for enthusiasts to make dupes of them. His was the skill which knew as well where to give his confidence as to withhold it; and he knew full surely that

the whole difficulty of the political art consists in being able to say whether any given person or scheme belongs to the right class or to the wrong. It would be very untrue to affirm that he never wilfully deceived others; but it would probably be still more erroneous to admit that he ever in his life was deceived. So he held in utter scorn the affected wisdom of those who think they prove themselves sound practical men by holding cheap every proposal to which the world has been little or not at all accustomed, and which relies for its support on principles rarely resorted to. His own plan for maintaining the peace and independence of Belgium may be cited as an example of a policy at once refined and profound. He would have had it made the resort of the fine arts and of letters, with only force enough to preserve its domestic peace, and trusting for its protection to the general abhorrence which all Europe must have, in these times, of any proceeding hostile to such a power.

Although M. Talleyrand never cultivated the art of oratory, yet his brilliant wit, enlivening a constant vein of deep sense and original observation, and his extraordinary mastery over all the resources of the language in which he expressed himself, gave to the efforts of his pen, as well as to his conversation, a relish, a charm, and a grace, that few indeed have ever attained, and certainly none have surpassed. His thorough familiarity with the best writers of his own country was manifest in all his compositions, as well as in his talk; which, however, was too completely modulated to the tone of the most refined society, ever to wear the least appearance of pedantry. To cite examples of the felicitous turns of his expression in writing, would be to take almost any passage at random of the few works which he has left. But the following description of the American planter may suffice to show how he could paint moral as well as natural scenery. The writers of a less severe school might envy its poetical effect, and might perhaps learn how possible it is to be pointed and epigrammatic

without being affected, and sentimental without being mawkish.

“Le bucheron Americain ne s’interesse à rien ; toute idée sensible est loin de lui ; ces branches si elegamment jettées par la nature, un beau feuillage, une couleur vive qui anime une partie du bois, un verd plus fort qui en assombroit une autre, tout cela n’est rien : il n’a de souvenir à placer nulle part : c’est la quantité de coups de hache qu’il faut qu’il donne pour abattre un arbre, qui est son unique idée. Il n’a point plante ; il n’en sait point les plaisirs. L’arbre qu’il planteroit n’est bon à rien pour lui ; car jamais il ne le verra assez fort pour qu’il puisse l’abattre : c’est de detruire qui le fait vivre : on detruit par-tout : aussi tout lieu lui est bon ; il ne tient pas au champ où il a placé son travail, parce que son travail, n’est que de la fatigue, et qu’aucune idée douce n’y est jointe. Ce qui sort de ses mains ne passe point par toutes les croissances si attachantes pour le cultivateur ; il ne suit pas la destinée de ses productions ; il ne connoit par le plaisir des nouveaux essais ; et si en s’en allant il n’oublie pas sa hache, il ne laisse pas de regrets là où il a vecu des années.”

Of his truly inimitable conversation, and the mixture of strong masculine sense, and exquisitely witty turns in which it abounded—independently of the interest, and the solid value which it derived from a rich fund of anecdote, delivered in the smallest number possible of the most happy and most appropriate words possible—it would indeed be difficult to convey an adequate idea. His own powers of picturesque, and wonderfully condensed expression would be hardly sufficient to present a portrait of its various and striking beauties. Simple and natural, yet abounding in the most sudden and unexpected turns—full of point, yet evidently the inspiration of the moment, and therefore more absolutely to the purpose than if it had been the laboured effort of a day’s reflection, a single word often performing the office of sentences, nay, a tone not unfrequently rendering many words superfluous—always the phrase most perfectly suitable selected, and its place

most happily chosen—all this is literally correct, and no picture of fancy, but a mere abridgment and transcript of the marvellous original; and yet it all falls very short of conveying its lineaments, and fails still more to render its colouring and its shades. For there was a constant gayety of manner, which had the mirthful aspect of good humour, even on the eve or on the morrow of some flash in which his witty raillery had wrapt a subject or a person in ridicule, or of some torrent in which his satire had descended instantaneous but destructive—there was an archness of malice, when more than ordinary execution must be done, that defied the pencil of the describer, as it did the attempts of the imitator—there were manners the most perfect in ease, in grace, in flexibility—there was the voice of singular depth and modulation, and the countenance alike fitted to express earnest respect, onostentatious contempt, and bland complacency—and all this must really have been witnessed to be accurately understood. His sayings—his *mots*, as the French have it—are renowned; but these alone convey an imperfect idea of his whole conversation. They show indeed the powers of his wit, and the felicity of his concise diction; and they have a peculiarity of style, such that, if shown without a name, no one could be at a loss to whom he should attribute them. But they are far enough from completing the sketch of his conversation to those who never heard it. A few instances may, however, be given, chiefly to illustrate what has been said of his characteristic conciseness and selection.

Being asked if a certain authoress, whom he had long since known, but who belonged rather to the last age, was not “un peu ennuyeuse,” “Du tout,” said he, “elle était *parfaitement* ennuyeuse.” A gentleman in company was one day making a somewhat zealous eulogy of his mother’s beauty, dwelling upon the topic at uncalled-for length—he himself having certainly inherited no portion of that kind under the marriage of his parents. “C’était, donc, monsieur votre père qui apparemment n’était pas trop bien,” was the remark, which at once released the

circle from the subject. When Madame de Staël published her celebrated novel of *Delphine*, she was supposed to have painted herself in the person of the heroine, and M. Talleyrand in that of an elderly lady, who is one of the principal characters. "On me dit (said he, the first time he met her) que nous sommes tous les deux dans votre roman, déguisés en femme." Rulhieres, the celebrated author of the work on the Polish revolution, having said, "Je n'ai fait qu'un mechanceté de ma vie;" "Et quand finira-t-elle?" was M. Talleyrand's reply. "Genève est ennuyeuse, n'est-ce pas?" asked a friend; "Surtout quand on s'y amuse," was the answer. "Elle est insupportable" (said he, with marked emphasis, of one well known; but as if he had gone too far, and to take off something of what he had laid on, he added) "Elle n'a que ce défaut-là." "Ah, je sens les tourmens d'enfer," said a person whose life had been supposed to be somewhat of the loosest. "Déjà?"* was the inquiry suggested to M. Talleyrand. Nor ought we to pass over the only *mot* that ever will be recorded of Charles X., uttered on his return to France in 1814, on seeing, like our second Charles at a similar reception, that the adversaries of his family had disappeared, "Il n'y a qu'un Français de plus." This was the suggestion of M. Talleyrand. He afterwards proposed, in like manner, to Charles's successor, that the foolish freaks of the Duchesse de Berri should be visited with this rescript to her and her faction—"Madame, il n'y a plus d'espoir pour vous, Vous serez jugé, condamnée, et graciée."

Of his temper and disposition in domestic life, it remains to speak; and nothing could be more perfect than these. If it be true, which is, however, more than questionable, that a life of public business hardens the heart; if this be far more certainly the tendency of a life much checkered with various fortune; if he is

* Certainly it came naturally to him: it is, however, not original. The Cardinal de Retz's physician is said to have made a similar exclamation on a like occasion:—*Déjà, Monseigneur?*"

almost certain to lose his natural sympathies with mankind, who has in his earliest years tasted the bitter cup of cruel and unnatural treatment, commended to his lips by the hands that should have cherished him; if, above all, a youth of fashionable dissipation and intrigue, such as M. Talleyrand, like most of our own great men, undeniably led, has, in almost every instance, been found to eradicate the softer domestic feelings, and to plant every selfish weed in the cold soil of a neglected bosom—surely it is no small praise of his kindly and generous nature, that we are entitled to record how marked an exception he formed to all these rules. While it would be a foolish and a needless exaggeration to represent him as careless of his own interest, or ambition, or gratification, at any period of his life, it is nevertheless quite true that his disposition continued to the last gentle and kindly; that he not only entertained throughout the tempest of the revolutionary anarchy the strongest abhorrence of all violent and cruel deeds, but exerted his utmost influence in mitigating the excesses which led to them in others; that his love of peace in all its blessed departments, whether tranquillity at home, or amity and good will abroad, was the incessant object of his labours; that, in domestic life, he was of a peculiarly placid temper, and full of warm and steady affections. His aversion to all violent courses was, indeed, in some instances, carried to a length which prevented his wonted calmness of judgment, and his constant and characteristic love of justice even when an adversary was concerned, from having their free scope. He never could speak with patience of Carnôt, for having continued, during the reign of terror, to serve and to save his country by directing the war which defended her against Europe in arms;—forgetting how much less could be urged for his own conduct under the profligate and tyrannical directory of 1797 and 1798, under the conscriptions of Napoleon, and under the military occupation of the Allies—even admitting his predominant de-

sire to prevent anarchy and conquest—than might most fairly be offered in defence of that illustrious republican's inflexible and uncompromising, though stern and undaunted virtue.

NAPOLEON.—WASHINGTON.

AFTER Lafayette had quitted the armies of the Republic, defaced by the crimes of 1792, and Carnôt himself, long the director of their marvellous achievements, and standing by his country in spite of all the excesses by which she was disfigured, had at length been driven from her side by the evil men that swayed her destinies, victory, long, so familiar to the French people, was for a season estranged from them, and the period of their conquests seemed at last to have arrived. A new and yet more triumphant course was then begun, under the genius of Napoleon Bonaparte, certainly the most extraordinary person who has appeared in modern times, and to whom, in some respects, no parallel can be found if we search the whole annals of the human race. For though the conquests of Alexander were more extensive, and the matchless character of Cæsar was embellished by more various accomplishments, and the invaders of Mexico and Peru worked their purposes of subjugation with far more scanty means, yet the military genius of the Great Captain shines with a lustre peculiarly its own, or which he shares with Hannibal alone, when we reflect that he never had to contend, like those conquerors, with adversaries inferior to himself in civilization or discipline, but won all his triumphs over hosts as well ordered and regularly marshalled and amply provided as his own.

This celebrated man was sprung from a good family in Corsica, and while yet a boy fixed the attention and raised the hopes of all his connections. In his early youth his military genius shone forth; he soon gained the summit of his profession; he commanded at twenty-five a military operation of a complicated and difficult nature in Paris: being selected for superior command

by the genius of Carnôt, he rapidly led the French armies through a series of victories till then unexampled, and to which, even now, his own after achievements can alone afford any parallel, for the suddenness, the vehemence, and the completeness of the operations. That much of his success was derived from the mechanical adherence of his adversaries to the formal rules of ancient tactics cannot be doubted; and our Wellington's campaigns would, in the same circumstances, and had he been opposed to similar antagonists, in all likelihood have been as brilliant and decisive. But he always had to combat the soldiers bred in Napoleon's school; while Napoleon, for the most part, was matched against men whose inveterate propensity to follow the rules of an obsolete science, not even the example of Frederic had been able to subdue; and who were resolved upon being a second time the victims of the same obstinate blindness which had, in Frederic's days, made genius triumph over numbers by breaking through rules repugnant to common sense. It must, however, be confessed, that although this consideration accounts for the achievements of this great warrior, which else had been impossible, nothing is thus detracted from his praise, excepting that what he accomplished ceases to appear miraculous: for it was his glory never to let an error pass unprofitably to himself; nor ever to give his adversary an advantage which he could not ravish from him, with ample interest, before it was turned to any fatal account.

Nor can it be denied, that, when the fortune of war proved adverse, the resources of his mind were only drawn forth in the more ample profusion. After the battle of Asperne he displayed more skill, as well as constancy, than in all his previous campaigns; and the struggle which he made in France, during the dreadful conflict that preceded his downfall, is by many regarded as the masterpiece of his military life. Nor let us forget that the grand error of his whole career, the mighty expedition to Moscow, was a political error only. The vast preparations for that campaign—the combinations

by which he collected and marshalled and moved this prodigious and various force like a single corps, or a domestic animal, or lifeless instrument in his hand—displayed, in the highest degree, the great genius for arrangement and for action with which he was endowed; and his prodigious efforts to regain the ground which the disasters of that campaign rescued from his grasp, were only not successful, because no human power could in a month create an army of cavalry, nor a word of command give recruits the discipline of veterans. In the history of war, it is, assuredly, only Hannibal who can be compared with him; and certainly, when we reflect upon the yet greater difficulties of the Carthaginian's position—the much longer time during which he maintained the unequal contest—still more, when we consider that his enemies have alone recorded his story, while Napoleon has been his own annalist—justice seems to require that the modern should yield to the ancient commander.

The mighty operation which led to his downfall, and in which all the resources of his vast capacity as well as all the recklessness of his boundless ambition were displayed, has long fixed, as it well might, the regards of mankind, and it has not been too anxiously contemplated. His course of victory had been for twelve years uninterrupted. The resources of France had been poured out without stint at his command. The destruction of her liberties had not relaxed the martial propensities of her people, nor thinned the multitudes that poured out their blood under his banners. The fervour of the revolutionary zeal had cooled, but the discipline which a vigorous despotism secures had succeeded, and the Conscription worked as great miracles as the Republic. The countless hosts which France thus poured forth, were led by this consummate warrior over all Italy, Spain, Germany; half the ancient thrones of Europe were subverted, the capitals of half her powers occupied in succession; and a monarchy was established which the existence of England and of Russia alone prevented from being universal.

But the vaulting ambition of the great conqueror at last overshot itself. After his most arduous and perhaps most triumphant campaign, undertaken with a profusion of military resources unexampled in the annals of war, the ancient capital of the Russian empire was in his hands; yet, from the refusal of the enemy to make peace, and the sterility of the vast surrounding country, the conquest was bootless to his purpose. He had collected the mightiest army that ever the world saw; from all parts of the Continent he had gathered his forces; every diversity of blood, and complexion, and tongue, and garb, and weapon, shone along his line;—"Exercitus mixtus ex colluvione omnium gentium, quibus non lex, non mos, non lingua communis; alius habitus, alia vestis, alia arma, alii ritûs, alia sacra"*—the resources of whole provinces moved through the kingdoms which his arms held in awe; the artillery of whole citadels traversed the fields; the cattle on a thousand hills were made the food of the myriads whom he poured into the plains of Eastern Europe, where blood flowed in rivers, and the earth was whitened with men's bones; but this gigantic enterprise, uniformly successful, was found to have no object, when it had no longer an enemy to overcome, and the victor in vain sued to the vanquished for peace. The conflagration of Moscow in one night began his discomfiture, which the frost of another night completed! Upon the pomp and circumstance of unnumbered warriors—their cavalry, their guns, their magazines, their equipage—descended slowly, flake by flake, the snow of a northern night;—"Tantaque vis frigoris insecuta est, ut ex illâ miserabili hominum jumentorumque strage quum se quisque attollere ac levare vellet, diu nequiret, quia torpentibus rigore nervis, vix flectere artus poterant."† The hopes of Napoleon were blighted; the retreat of his armament was cut off; and his doom sealed far more irreversibly than if the conqueror of a hundred fields had been overthrown in battle, and made

* Liv. xxviii. 22.

† Liv. xxi. 58.

captive with half his force. All his subsequent efforts to regain the power he had lost never succeeded in countervailing the effects of that Russian night. The fire of his genius burnt, if possible, brighter than ever; in two campaigns his efforts were more than human, his resources more miraculous than before, his valour more worthy of the prize he played for—but all was vain: his weapon was no longer in his hand; his army was gone; and his adversaries, no more quailing under the feeling of his superior nature, had discovered him to be vincible like themselves, and grew bold in their turn, as the Mexicans gathered courage, three centuries ago, from finding that the Spaniards were subject to the accidents of mortality.

Such was this great captain, and such was the fate on which the conqueror rushed.

It is quite certain that the mighty genius of Napoleon was of the highest order; he was one of the greatest masters of the art of war; he is to be ranked among the generals of the highest class, if indeed there be any but Hannibal who can be placed on a level with him. To all the qualities, both in the council and in the field, which combine to form an accomplished commander, he added, what but few indeed have ever shown, an original genius; he was so great an improver on the inventions of others, that he might well lay claim to the honours of discovery. The tactics of Frederick he carried so much farther, and with such important additions, that we might as well deny to Watt the originating of the steam-engine, as to Napoleon the being an inventor in military science. The great step which Frederick made was the connecting together all the operations of an extensive campaign in various quarters, and especially the moving vast bodies of troops rapidly on a given point, so as to fight his adversaries there at a certain advantage. This required a brave neglect of the established rules of tactics; it required a firm determination to despise formidable obstacles; it required an erasure of the words “difficult and impossible” from the general’s vocabulary. In proportion to all the hardihood

of these operations, was the high merit of their author, and also the certainty of their success against the regular mechanical generals of Maria Theresa, to whom he was opposed. So much the rather are we to wonder at the successors of those generals, the produce of the same Germanic school, showing themselves as unprepared for the great extension of the Prussian system, but in the same direction, which Napoleon practised, and being as completely taken unawares by his rapid movements at Ulm, and his feints at Wagram, as their masters had been at Rosbach, at Pirna, and at Prague.

The degree in which he thus extended and improved upon Frederic's tactics was great indeed. No man ever could bring such bodies into the field; none provide by combined operations for their support; none move such masses from various quarters upon one point; none manœuvre at one fight the thousands whom he had assembled, change his operations as the fate of the hour or the moment required, and tell with such absolute certainty the effects of each movement. He had all the knowledge in minute detail which the art of war requires; he had a perfectly accurate appreciation of what men and horses and guns can do; his memory told him in an instant where each corps, each regiment, each gun was situated both in peace and war, and in what condition almost each company of his vast force was at any moment. Then he possessed the intuitive knowledge of his enemy's state, and movements, and plans; so nicely could he unravel all conflicting accounts, and decide at once as by intuition which was true. In the field his eye for positions, distances, elevations, numbers, was quick, and it was infallible. All his generals at all times submitted their judgment to his and without the least reluctance or hesitation, not deferring to his authority, but yielding from an absolute conviction of his superior skill; nor ever doubting, because firmly assured he was in the right. His own self-confidence was in the same proportion, and it was unerring.

Lying under some cover in fire, he would remain

for an hour or two, receiving reports and issuing his orders, sometimes with a plan before him, sometimes with the face to the ground in his mind only. There he is with his watch in one hand, while the other moves constantly from his pocket, where his snuff-box or rather his snuff lies.—An aide-de-camp arrives, tells of a movement, answers shortly some questions rapidly, perhaps impatiently, but is despatched with the order that is to solve the difficulty of some general of division. Another is ordered to attend, and sent off with directions to make some distant corps support an operation. The watch is again consulted; more impatient symptoms; the name of one aide-de-camp is constantly pronounced; question after question is put whether any one is coming from a certain quarter; an event is expected; it ought to have happened; at length the wished-for messenger arrives—“Eh bien! Qu’a-t-on fait là-bas?” “La hauteur est gagnée; le maréchal est là.” “Qu’il tienne ferme—pas un pas de mouvement.” Another aide-de-camp is ordered to bring up the Guard. “Que le maréchal avance vers la tour en défilant par sa gauche—et tout ce qui se trouve à sa droite est prisonnier.”—Now the watch is consulted and the snuff is taken no more; the battle is over; the fortune of the day is decided; the great Captain indulges in pleasantries; nor doubts any more of the certainty and of the extent of his victory than if he had already seen its details in the bulletin.

After all, the grand secret of both Frederic and Napoleon’s successes, the movement of the masses which were to place their enemy in a disadvantageous position, appears to be, like all great improvements, sufficiently obvious; for it is founded on the very natural principle on which the modern naval plan of breaking the line proceeds. If either at sea or on shore one party can place his enemy between two fires, or on any material part of his battle bring double the force to bear upon the defenders of that point, the success of the operation is certain. In order to execute such a plan on shore, a prodigious combination of military resources is required, and they only who are so amply furnished can venture

to attempt it. That Napoleon had this capacity beyond other men is altogether incontestable.

But his genius was not confined to war: he possessed a large capacity also for civil affairs. He saw as clearly, and as quickly determined on his course, in government as in the field. His public works, and his political reformatations, especially his Code of Laws, are monuments of his wisdom and his vigour, more imperishable, as time has already proved, and as himself proudly foretold, than all his victories. His civil courage was more brilliant than his own, or most other men's valour in the field. How ordinary a bravery it was that blazed forth at Lodi, when he headed his wavering columns across the bridge swept by the field of Austrian artillery, compared with the undaunted and sublime courage that carried him from Cannes to Paris with a handful of men, and fired his bosom with the desire, and sustained it with the confidence, of overthrowing a dynasty, and overwhelming an empire, by the terror of his name!

Nor were his endowments merely those of the statesman and the warrior. If he was not, like Cæsar, a consummate orator, he yet knew men so thoroughly, and especially Frenchmen, whom he had most nearly studied, that he possessed the faculty of addressing them in strains of singular eloquence—an eloquence peculiar to himself. It is not more certain that he is the greatest soldier whom France ever produced, than it is certain that his place is high amongst her greatest writers, as far as composition or diction is concerned. Some of his bulletins are models for the purpose which they were intended to serve; his address to the soldiers of his Old Guard at Fontainebleau is a masterpiece of dignified and pathetic composition; his speech during the Hundred Days, at the Champ de Mars, beginning, "General, Consul, Empereur, je tiens tout du Peuple," is to be placed among the most perfect pieces of simple and majestic eloquence. These things are not the less true for being seldom or never remarked.

But with these great qualities of the will—the highest courage, the most easy formation of his resolutions, the

most steadfast adherence to his purpose, the entire devotion of all his energies to his object—and with the equally shining faculties of the understanding by which that firm will worked—the clearest and quickest apprehension, the power of intense application, the capacity of complete abstraction from all interrupting ideas, the complete and most instantaneous circumspection of all difficulties, whether on one side, or even providently seen in prospect, the intuitive knowledge of men, and the power of mind and of tongue to mould their will to his purpose—with these qualities, which form the character held greatest by vulgar minds, the panegyric of Napoleon must close. HE WAS A CONQUEROR;—HE WAS A TYRANT. To gratify his ambition—to slake his thirst of power—to weary a lust of dominion which no conquest could satiate—he trampled on Liberty when his hand might have raised her to a secure place; and he wrapt the world in flames, which the blood of millions alone could quench. By those passions, a mind not originally unkindly, was perverted and deformed till human misery ceased to move it, and honesty, and truth, and pity, all sense of the duties we owe to God and to man, had departed from one thus given up to a single and a selfish pursuit. “*Tantas animi virtutes ingentia vitia æquabant; inhumana credulitas;* perfidia plusquam Punica; nihil veri, nihil sancti, nullus Deûm*

* The kindliness of his nature will be denied by some; the inhuman cruelty by others: but both are correctly true. There is extant a letter which we have seen, full of the tenderest affection towards his favourite brother, to whom it was addressed, when about to be separated from him, long after he had entered on public life. It is in parts blotted with his tears, evidently shed before the ink was dry. As for his cruelty, they only can deny it who think it more cruel for a man to witness torments which he has ordered, or to commit butchery with his own hand, than to give a command which must consign thousands to agony and death. If Napoleon had been called upon to witness, or with his own hand to inflict such misery, he would have paused at first—because physical repugnance would have prevailed over mental callousness. But how many minutes’ reflection would it have taken to deaden the pain, and make him execute his own purpose?

metus, nullum jusjurandum, nulla religio.”* The death of Enghein, the cruel sufferings of Wright, the mysterious end of Pichegru, the punishment of Palm, the tortures of Toussaint,† have all been dwelt upon as the spots on his fame; because the fortunes of individuals presenting a more definite object to the mind, strike our imaginations, and rouse our feelings more than wretchedness in larger masses, less distinctly perceived. But to the eye of calm reflection, the declaration of an unjustifiable war, or the persisting in it a day longer than is necessary, presents a more grievous object of contemplation, implies a disposition more pernicious to the world, and calls down a reprobation far more severe.

How grateful the relief which the friend of mankind, the lover of virtue, experiences when, turning from the contemplation of such a character, his eye rests upon the greatest man of our own or any age;—the only one upon whom an epithet so thoughtlessly lavished by men, to foster the crimes of their worst enemies, may be innocently and justly bestowed! In Washington we truly behold a marvellous contrast to almost every one of the endowments and the vices which we have been contemplating; and which are so well fitted to excite a mingled admiration, and sorrow, and abhorrence. With none of that brilliant genius which dazzles ordinary minds; with not even any remarkable quickness of apprehension; with knowledge less than almost all persons in the middle ranks, and many well educated of the humbler classes possess; this eminent person is presented to our observation clothed in attributes as modest, as unpretending, as little calculated to strike or to astonish, as if he had passed unknown through some secluded region of private life. But he had a judgment sure and

* Liv. xxi.

† It is a gross error to charge him with the poisoning of his sick in Egypt; and his massacre of the prisoners at Jaffa is a very controverted matter. But we fear the early anecdote of his ordering an attack, with no other object than to gratify his mistress, when a young officer of artillery, rests upon undeniable authority; and if so, it is to be placed amongst his worst crimes.

sound ; a steadiness of mind which never suffered any passion, or even any feeling to ruffle its calm ; a strength of understanding which worked rather than forced its way through all obstacles—removing or avoiding rather than overleaping them. If profound sagacity, unshaken steadiness of purpose, the entire subjugation of all the passions which carry havoc through ordinary minds, and oftentimes lay waste the fairest prospects of greatness—nay, the discipline of those feelings which are wont to lull or to seduce genius, and to mar and to cloud over the aspect of virtue herself—joined with, or rather leading to the most absolute self-denial, the most habitual and exclusive devotion to principle—if these things can constitute a great character, without either quickness of apprehension, or resources of information, or inventive powers, or any brilliant quality that might dazzle the vulgar—then surely Washington was the greatest man that ever lived in this world uninspired by Divine wisdom, and unsustained by supernatural virtue.

Nor could the human fancy create a combination of qualities, even to the very wants and defects of the subject, more perfectly fitted for the scenes in which it was his lot to bear the chief part ; whether we regard the war which he conducted, the political constitution over which he afterwards presided, or the tempestuous times through which he had finally to guide the bark himself had launched. Averse as his pure mind and temperate disposition naturally was from the atrocities of the French Revolution, he yet never leant against the cause of liberty, but clung to it even when degraded by the excesses of its savage votaries. Towards France, while he reprobated her aggressions upon other states, and bravely resisted her pretensions to control his own, he yet never ceased to feel the gratitude which her aid to the American cause had planted eternally in every American bosom ; and for the freedom of a nation which had followed the noble example of his countrymen in breaking the chains of a thousand years, he united with those countrymen in cherishing a natural sympathy and

regard. Towards England, whom he had only known as a tyrant, he never, even in the worst times of French turbulence at home, and injury to foreign states, could unbend from the attitude of distrust and defiance into which the conduct of her sovereign and his Parliament, not unsupported by her people, had forced him, and in which the war had left him. Nor was there ever among all the complacent self-delusions with which the fond conceits of national vanity are apt to intoxicate us, one more utterly fantastical than the notion wherewith the politicians of the Pitt school were wont to flatter themselves and beguile their followers—that simply because the Great American would not yield either to the bravadoes of the Republican envoy, or to the fierce democracy of Jefferson, he therefore had become weary of Republics, and a friend to monarchy and to England. In truth, his devotion to liberty, and his intimate persuasion that it can only be enjoyed under the Republican scheme, constantly gained strength to the end of his truly glorious life; and his steady resolution to hold the balance even between contending extremes at home, as well as to repel any advance from abroad incompatible with perfect independence, was not more dictated by the natural justice of his disposition, and the habitual sobriety of his views, than it sprang from a profound conviction that a commonwealth is most effectually served by the commanding prudence which checks all excesses, and guarantees it against the peril that chiefly besets popular governments.

His courage, whether in battle or in council, was as perfect as might be expected from this pure and steady temper of soul. A perfect just man, with a thoroughly firm resolution never to be mislead by others, any more than to be by others overawed; never to be seduced or betrayed, or hurried away by his own weaknesses or self-delusions; any more than by other men's arts; nor never to be disheartened by the most complicated difficulties, any more than to be spoilt on the giddy

heights of fortune—such was this great man—great, pre-eminently great, whether we regard him sustaining alone the whole weight of campaigns all but desperate, or gloriously terminating a just warfare by his resources and his courage—presiding over the jarring elements of his political council, alike deaf to the storms of all extremes—or directing the formation of a new government for a great people, the first time that so vast an experiment had ever been tried by man—or finally retiring from the supreme power to which his virtue had raised him over the nation he had created, and whose destinies he had guided as long as his aid was required—retiring with the veneration of all parties, of all nations, of all mankind, in order that the rights of men might be conserved, and that his example never might be appealed to by vulgar tyrants. This is the consummate glory of Washington; a triumphant warrior where the most sanguine had a right to despair; a successful ruler in all the difficulties of a course wholly untried; but a warrior, whose sword only left its sheath when the first law of our nature commanded it to be drawn; and a ruler who, having tasted of supreme power, gently and unostentatiously desired that the cup might pass from him, nor would suffer more to wet his lips than the most solemn and sacred duty to his country and his God required!

To his latest breath did this great patriot maintain the noble character of a captain the patron of peace, and a statesman the friend of justice. Dying, he bequeathed to his heirs the sword which he had worn in the war for liberty, and charged them “Never to take it from the scabbard but in self-defence, or in defence of their country and her freedom; and commanding them that when it should thus be drawn, they should never sheath it nor ever give it up, but prefer falling with it in their hands to the relinquishment thereof”—words, the majesty and simple eloquence of which are not surpassed in the oratory of Athens and Rome.

It will be the duty of the historian and the sage in all ages to let no occasion pass of commemorating this illustrious man ; and until time shall be no more will a test of the progress which our race has made in wisdom and in virtue be derived from the veneration paid to the immortal name of WASHINGTON !

THE END.

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